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MAPPING POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN CONTEXTS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

MONTENEGRO COUNTRY REPORT

**WORKING DOCUMENT
JANUARY 2010**

A Report prepared by SCIENTER and
Centre for Education Policy

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FOREWORD

This report is the outcome of the ETF regional project promoting inclusive education and training policies and practices in contexts of social and cultural diversity in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In 2009, the European Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned a study resulting in 7 country reports¹ *“Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity”* with the overall aim to contribute to the promotion of inclusive education and training policies and practices in Western Balkan countries. The study has been set within a wider framework of other studies, research and policies already carried out by national and international organisations. Furthermore in the diverse social and cultural contexts of the Western Balkan countries the studies link the challenge of inclusive education to the broader challenges of social inclusion and social cohesion, which are high on the EU agenda.

The study was designed to explore various perspectives of the relevant actors, and relies on qualitative data collected through documents analysis, interviews and focus groups, as well as information collected in an on-line survey. It was conceptualised to be carried out in two phases. The first phase finalised by the end of December 2009, mapped policies and practices in teacher preparation in each of the countries under study. The primary focus of the study was teacher education in contexts of social and cultural diversity. While a number of studies have addressed on the one hand social inclusion in education and training where focus is placed on i) access, attainment and progression and ii) teacher preparation, still we can say that so far little research has been conducted in the region to look at teacher preparation for development of transversal competences for social inclusion. Therefore, the completed country reports bring additional value to the already existing research and data on policies and practices for teacher education in the countries under study. Moreover, much of the benefit of this research is through the process of carrying it out with local research teams, who through their research, have opened up the relevant issues in the countries as part of an on-going policy dialogue at all levels of the education system on the topic.

The first phase included the drafting of a common thematic outline used as a basis for country reports that provided relevant qualitative information as well as basic qualitative analyses. These country reports constitute the main preparatory work and stock-taking exercise for regional level analysis. In order to analyse the relevant aspects of the regional context and how to enhance and support the processes at country and regional level, a second phase of the research is agreed for the period 2010. This will lead to a cross country report which will analyse and synthesise the findings of the 7 country reports into a regional map of policies and practices. The cross country report aims to critically analyse and synthesise the policies and practices in teacher preparation for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity in Western Balkans.

A consortium company, SCIENTER and Centre for Education Policy (CEP) has been contracted to work with the ETF on the country and cross country reports. The ETF selected research team from SCIENTER/CEP have been working very closely with the ETF-supported Balkan Regional Policy Network during the research phase. The draft country reports have been reviewed by the ETF social inclusion team (Dagmar Ouzoun, Elena Pompilio, Evgenia Petkova, Henrik Faudel, Keith Holmes and Lida Kita) and been widely discussed and received feedback from the Western Balkans and Turkey key stakeholders during the 2009 ETF organised regional events.

We thank everybody involved for their contributions, support and commitment to cooperation in preparation of the country report.

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (defined by UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
DG EAC	Directorate General Education and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate General Employment
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EURAC	European Academy Bozen/Bolzano
FOSI-ROM	Foundation Open Society Institute-Representative Office Montenegro
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
MONSTAT	Statistics Institute of the Republic of Montenegro
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSI	Open Society Institute
RAE	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
REF	Roma Education Fund
SEN	Special Education Needs
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study has been conducted within the European Training Foundation (ETF) regional project on social inclusion through education and training in Southeast Europe. The report represents one part of the regional study and focuses on mapping policies and practices for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in Montenegro, with the objective of analysing teacher pre-service education and in-service professional development. The study, designed to explore various perspectives of the relevant actors, relies on qualitative data collected through the analysis of documents, interviews and focus group discussions and information collected in an online survey.

The government of Montenegro launched all-encompassing reforms of the education system in 2000 which resulted in legislation changes across all education levels. The education reforms aim at introducing new models of high quality education. The underlying principles are decentralisation, equal opportunities, choices based on individual abilities, European standards, implementing a quality system, human resource development, lifelong learning, flexibility, curriculum compatibility with the education level and the gradual introduction of changes. Some of the underlying principles led to the introduction of quality indicators and standards, increased involvement and support of parents and the local community in the work of schools, introduction of open and flexible curricula and the promotion of child-centred approach to teaching (OSI, 2007). The strategies and reforms addressing inclusive education and teacher preparation for inclusive education specifically should be seen within the wider setting of overall education reform.

In addition to overall education reform, Montenegro has invested significant efforts in developing strategies and legislation for the creation of an inclusive education system. The concept of inclusive education focuses more on the different strategies for inclusion of different target groups to mainstream classes (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) children and children with special educational needs (SEN), in particular) rather than on diversity in classrooms in general. One of the reasons for choosing this approach lies in the longstanding system of segregating SEN children and often RAE children in special schools.

The outlined principles of the education reforms underpin social inclusion strategies in Montenegro; in combination, they are showing initial positive results, particularly through increased numbers of students with special needs and RAE students in mainstream schools, use of the Index for Inclusion in regular kindergartens and primary schools in Montenegro (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, Montenegrin/Serbian edition, 2009) to monitor inclusiveness, etc. Bearing in mind the initial positive outcomes, it seems that the time is right for a discussion regarding broadening the concept of inclusion to a more general approach, although it is appreciated that more time will be needed to attain a fully inclusive education system.

With regard to minorities, the Montenegro Constitution guarantees education for minorities at the level of general education objectives and principles, as well as regarding provision for individuals. Stemming from the constitutional rights, the national legislation guarantees the education of students from minority backgrounds in their mother language and literature.

Bearing in mind the current emphasis on the inclusion of children with disabilities, the teachers interviewed in the study primarily discussed particular competences needed to be able to work with students with disabilities. Teachers emphasised the importance of competences to create and apply individual education plans. Teachers felt competent to recognise the individual needs of students, but identified a clear lack of competences to cater for the identified needs. In the authors' views, teachers prioritised the competences that are directly used in their own classrooms, but rarely mentioned broader competences required to support cognitive, emotional and moral development, competences necessary to build relationships with parents and

the local community, knowledge and understanding of documents and the principles underpinning social inclusion, non-discrimination strategies, etc.

Participants in this study were unanimous in their opinion that pre-service teacher education does not prepare teachers adequately to work in this type of more inclusive classroom. This lack was more evident among subject teachers in upper primary and secondary schools than among those trained for pre-school and primary school grades 1-4.

In the opinion of respondents, inclusive education needs to place more emphasis on individual work and on ensuring student access to what is being taught and not treating them only as a group. Teacher educators themselves pointed out that the concept of education at the Faculty of Teacher Education should be redirected towards applying new educational models and encouraging innovation in teaching approaches, and should be augmented with several subjects dealing with methods for working with SEN students as well as with more practical work during their studies, thus ensuring more knowledgeable staff who can deal with the challenges of modern education concepts.

In the view of the authors, there is awareness of the social significance of inclusive education amongst teacher educators and student teachers. This awareness contributes to the partial acceptance of children with disabilities and RAE children being educated in mainstream schools. Even if not comprehensive, this acceptance adds to the need to review and update pre-service teacher education programmes so that they become more sensitive to diversity and the needs of individual students. There was a high level of agreement among the research respondents that issues relating to school students with special needs need to permeate all courses in pre-service teacher education programmes. However, while it is important for student teachers to develop positive attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills to work with children with special needs, it is also vital to widen the concept of inclusion to encompass the full diversity of all possible backgrounds of school students.

In the Bureau for Education Services which deals with the development of education and its processes, a specific unit is responsible for inclusive education and its statistical review. This has led to the development of a national system of training and professional development.

From the authors' perspective, at the policy level the pre-conditions for continuous teacher professional development (individual, group, formal and informal) are well designed. Teachers have the opportunity to choose educational programmes from catalogues and to use relevant manuals, which are delivered directly to schools. Overall, the authors are inclined to conclude that the participation of teachers in in-service training opportunities to date has contributed to the development of some degree of affirmative inclusive attitudes toward students with disabilities and towards RAE students, at least amongst the teachers consulted. Nevertheless, the weakness in the pre-service training and in-service level of education, is most obviously noted by respondents in the provision for subject teachers and teachers in secondary general and vocational education. In-service education should actually compensate for the shortfall in pre-service teacher education for inclusion, but instead continues the deficit. It seems, both from the research findings and observations, that these teachers need additional knowledge and skills to work with students, particularly SEN students, and to build competences to address diversity in the classroom. The authors believe that in-service teacher training has a key role to play through continuous education, professional support and better communication with families and amongst school staff, and especially amongst teachers and school service staff (psychologists, pedagogues, etc).

Based on the evidence acquired during this study, the authors propose a number of measures, which, based on the evidence from the research, would be likely to accelerate reform related to inclusion policy through action by system-level decision makers, teacher trainers and teachers

Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity

COUNTRY REPORT FOR MONTENEGRO

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Objectives and Context

1.1.1 Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this study on *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity*, commissioned by the European Training Foundation, is to contribute to the promotion of inclusive education and training policies and practices in contexts of social and cultural diversity in the Western Balkans. The study is organised in two phases: a first phase which considers the national situation in each of the countries covered; and a second phase synthesising the reports into a regional map of policies and practices.

This report falls into the first research phase and the specific objectives are: (1) to analyse policies and practices on initial teacher training and in-service professional development schemes at the country level, and (2) to identify issues, challenges and good practices in the seven participant countries² with regard to the skills and competences needed for primary and secondary teachers to implement inclusive education practices.

The primary focus of the study is teacher preparation in the context of social and cultural diversity. A number of studies have already addressed social inclusion in education and training where the focus is placed on access, attainment and progression and others have approached the issue of teacher training, but thus far, there has been little research in the region to combine the two themes under the single issue of 'teacher training for development of competences for social inclusion.' Therefore, this study provides added value to existing research and data on social inclusion and teacher education in the countries under study. Moreover, great benefits have come from the local research process, opening up discussion of relevant issues in the countries as part of an on-going policy dialogue at all levels of the education system. This study has been set within a wider framework of studies, research and policies already carried out as described in Chapter 2 of the report. This report has been designed as mapping exercises to collect initial information on relevant issues

² Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

in the Western Balkans and to evaluate that data against the most recent international research in the area. Furthermore, the studies link the challenge of inclusive education to the broader challenges of social inclusion and social cohesion in the diverse social and cultural contexts of the Western Balkan countries; an issue high on the European Union (EU) agenda. This report points to potential new fields for more in-depth research on teacher education and social inclusion.

1.1.2 Context of the Study

The ETF is an EU Agency³ and promotes the values and objectives of the EU. The work of the ETF is particularly based on the premise that vocational education and training makes a fundamental contribution to competitiveness, employability and mobility in modern economies. The ETF mission is to help transition and developing countries harness the potential of their human capital through reforms in the education, training and labour market systems in line with EU external relations policy. The ETF provides advice and assistance to the European Commission (EC) and a number of partner countries⁴ receiving support from EU external relations programmes for the modernisation of human capital development policies.

In 2007, the EU introduced new external assistance instruments that aimed to establish clearer relationships between the EU and partner countries (EC, 2004). Candidate and potential candidate countries can move progressively towards accession with support from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) (EC, 2006).

ETF efforts to prioritise human resources provide many benefits as they: help provide a better living for individuals and families; reduce illiteracy, poverty and crime in partner countries; and encourage more stable relations between the EU and its neighbours. The outcome is reduced pressure for migration, more opportunities for trade, safer jobs in Europe, and, in short: prosperity and stability for both EU Member States and their neighbours.

Work on human capital development offers a solid foundation for the improvement of living conditions, strengthening of democracy and active citizen participation, encouraging respect for human rights and cultural diversity.

In addition, the ETF emphasises the lifelong learning aspect of education and training, especially bearing in mind the economic and political transition processes in partner countries and the need to expand capacities for learning and facilitate recognition of non-formal learning.

The ETF recast regulation adopted in December 2008⁵ stating that it will work through EU foreign policy to improve vocational education and training systems in order to develop human capital, in terms defined as work that contributes to the lifelong development of the skills and competences of individuals. In response to this new mandate, the ETF prepared a new Mid-Term Perspective (MTP) 2010-13 setting the key perspectives for the work programme. The ETF is particularly focused on cooperation for gender equality and equity, lifelong guidance, sustainable development and social inclusion with partner countries. Equitable, inclusive and

³ The ETF was established by Council Regulation No. 1360 in 1990 (recast No. 1339 in 2008) to contribute to the development of the education and training systems of the EU partner countries.

⁴ ETF works with the following partner countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1339/2008 of 16 December 2008

sustainable systems and responses to human capital challenges provide positive indicators for human development and also have long-term benefits for society. They promote economic and social development and thus contribute to competitiveness and well-being.

The concept of wider European cooperation in education and training was launched at the 2002 Barcelona Council and the Commission Communication on an updated strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training (European Commission, 2008a) strengthened the process by focusing on four strategic challenges⁶ for the 2010-20 period. The Council Conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)⁷ state that, 'European cooperation in education and training for the period up to 2020 should be established in the context of a strategic framework spanning education and training systems as a whole in a lifelong learning perspective.' In reaching the objectives set within the strategic framework, particular attention is given to ensuring high quality teaching through adequate initial teacher education and continuous professional development for teachers and trainers.

While fully respecting the responsibility of Member States for their own educational systems, the strategic framework recognised that open coordination should draw on 'evidence and data from all relevant European agencies'. The ETF role in supporting enhanced mutual learning, transfer of innovation and policy development in the field of education and training in third countries is also mentioned.

Thus, ETF work on human capital development is guided by a number of international standard-setting documents, including the *Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Also, in view of the ongoing European integration process of some of the partner countries and territories (the so-called IPA group⁸), it must be stressed that human rights principles, including respect for and protection of minorities, are an integral part of the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession. This means that the Western Balkan countries are also required to comply with the EU legislative *acquis*⁹ in the field of anti-discrimination and equal opportunities.

The Western Balkan countries have already ratified the main international conventions on human and minority rights and are in the process of adopting the *acquis*. The education ministers of the South Eastern Europe region signed a joint statement making a commitment to the area of human capital development in South Eastern Europe as a long-term investment at the Informal Conference of European Ministers of Education in Oslo on 5-6 June 2008. This statement expresses a commitment to promote: quality, diversity and equitable access to education; innovatory capacity within education systems; and intercultural capacities of educational institutions as key prerequisites to the prosperity and sustainable development of the Western Balkan countries and their integration to the EU. The ministers stated their intention to promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation at local, regional, national and international levels to foster environments conducive to creativity and innovation, *inter alia* by encouraging cooperation between the areas of education, higher education and research (Minister of Education from Southern Europe, 2008).

⁶ Make lifelong learning and learner mobility a reality; improve the quality and efficiency of provision and outcomes; promote equity and active citizenship; enhance innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

⁷ www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/107622.pdf (page accessed 17th December 2009)

⁸ These are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

⁹ The Community *acquis* is the body of common rights and obligations which bind all the Member States together within the European Union. It comprises the Community law as well as the common objectives laid down in EU Treaties. Applicant countries have to accept the Community *acquis* before they can join the Union.

However, appropriate legislation alone cannot overcome the obstacles to social inclusion and integration as structural and institutional barriers also need to be addressed. A number of specific poverty reduction strategies have been adopted with support from international donors and intergovernmental organisations in a number of Western Balkan countries and these have started a trend in the right direction. A number of countries have also adopted specific education reform strategies in acknowledgement of the role of education and training in ensuring sustainable growth and social inclusion. These focus on inclusion in education in terms of access, participation, retention, completion and quality of learning outcomes to varying extents.

1.1.3 Education Reforms and the Role of Teachers in Inclusive Education

System reform on inclusive education is moving from the system level downwards in the countries covered by this study. Legislation and strategies are in place in most of the countries and in many cases implementation mechanisms such as new curricula are being developed and adopted for pre-school, primary and secondary education. The focus of attention is gradually being shifted onto what actually happens in classroom interaction between pupils and teachers. This places the emphasis firmly upon the disposition, skills, knowledge and motivation of teachers in adopting new approaches to the education of children from various socio-economic, cultural and experiential backgrounds. It is their input that is paramount in ensuring any real changes in practice, and hence impacts on the outcomes of learning. In the Western Balkans, however, research into teacher acquisition of the competences required to deliver inclusive education is at an embryonic stage.

One study of teacher competences (Pantić, 2008) reported teachers in BiH, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia covered in the present research placed greatest importance on competences relating to equality, supporting the learning of all pupils and the promotion cultural diversity in the broadest sense. However, deeper understanding is needed of how the formulation of relevant competences actually translates into daily teaching practices and how present and future teachers can best be helped to develop those competences that best ensure and promote an inclusive society and education.

The ETF has therefore made a commitment to support the Western Balkan countries (2007-2011), placing emphasis on how education and training can reduce social exclusion in culturally heterogeneous societies and facilitating the development and implementation of long-term sustainable strategic policy approaches.

One of the first outcomes of this commitment was the *Social Inclusion of Ethnic Groups through Education and Training: Elements of Good Practices*, document commissioned by the ETF in 2007. Relevant areas for policy development were highlighted and several recommendations on designing and implementing inclusive education and training policies and measures in the Western Balkan countries were provided. The findings of the study were also discussed by national authorities and experts from Western Balkan countries, leading to the identification of challenges and to the drafting of related policy notes in some countries. Furthermore, an expert group was established for the Western Balkans, consisting of stakeholders from the region (a mixed profile of academics, policy makers and practitioners from public institutions or NGOs), representatives of international organisations active in the region and the EC Directorate General for Enlargement, Directorate General for Education and Culture and Directorate General for Employment). The work of this group is supported by the ETF.

Finally, in the concluding statements of the ETF conference in November 2008, participants from IPA countries and territories stressed the need for greater emphasis on intercultural or inclusive education and training in the broader sense, and especially on the role and competences of teachers in this context. This perspective was primarily prompted by the conclusion in both pre-service teacher training and in-service professional

development in the Western Balkan countries that schools are widely assumed to be mono-ethnic institutions with homogeneous class compositions. Teachers are generally ill prepared to work with children and parents from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. There is a need for increased teacher competence in recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity in the classroom and wider society and there must be enhanced teacher competence to overcome discrimination, exclusion and disadvantage in education.

Activities aimed at initial teacher training reform are additionally motivated and marked by the Bologna Process. This serves as an overarching framework for re-thinking the duration, content and organisation of teacher education study programmes for pre-primary, lower primary, upper primary and secondary education levels. In a number of countries, discussion of the university 3+2 or 4+1 dilemma¹⁰ has inspired heated debate on the objectives and learning outcomes of particular teacher education programmes. Debate has also been provoked on the amount, type and delivery of didactic, methodological and pedagogical input for teachers, especially those training to teach specific subjects. However, there is currently no appropriate research evidence available to inform such change and provide insight on exactly how the new competences required by the teaching profession could best be developed in the current context.

Studies on existing teacher training in the region (Pantić, 2008; Rajković and Radunović, 2007; Zgaga 2006) invariably show present provision concentrates on theoretical and subject related knowledge and skills with little hands-on experience of teaching in real-life classrooms. In fact, some courses involve no classroom experience at all and provide no opportunities for the teacher to increase their capacity to deal with a number of out-of-school factors relevant to inclusive education such as parental and community involvement. This factor alone represents one of the major challenges to teacher preparation for inclusive education and training practices. One of the main objectives of this study is therefore how best to improve existing teacher training policies and practices in order to foster the development of teacher competences relevant to inclusive education and training practices.

¹⁰ Within the Bologna Process the study programmes are to be restructured into a two-tier structure in which Bachelor and Master programmes are to be of either 3+2 or 4+1 years in length.

2. WIDER CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The countries in the Western Balkans have undertaken initiatives to adapt their education and training systems to national employment, social inclusion and competitiveness goals. However, implementation often lags behind declared policy goals. Persistent challenges include: the widening of choice and improvement of quality in vocational education, training and adult learning; the active engagement of social partners; the furthering of key competences; and, in particular, encouragement of the human sense of innovation and entrepreneurship so central to social and economic success. There is room for a massive improvement in teacher competences on inclusive education and efforts must also be made to reduce early school-leaving in contexts of socially and culturally diverse societies.

The term ‘disadvantaged’ could be attributed to many groups in the countries of this study when referring to access to, progress in and completion of aspects of quality education and training. A variety of minority groups are involved including ethnic communities (the Roma in particular but not exclusively) and disadvantaged children. The latter includes: children with disabilities and special needs; children from remote and rural areas; children of refugees or internally displaced persons; children from families deported from foreign countries (mostly within the EU); and many other groups. Gender is an important element, particularly when combined with any other factor of a disadvantaged background, and poverty is an attendant salient feature in the lives of a great many families in these minority sectors. The widest possible understanding of inclusion in education and training is needed if we are to capture the full scope of related problems and accommodate the specific problems of diverse disadvantaged groups in the Western Balkan countries. This is reflected in the conceptual framework of this study which takes an approach that is balanced between the general pluralism and equal opportunities perspectives.

This research is situated in a set of contexts where each country has different (and sometimes divergent) legislative, policy and practice initiatives in place. These contexts can be roughly categorised from most generic to most specific as:

1. general context of social inclusion developments and the promotion of ethnic and other diversity and tolerance and overall democratisation of society in a post-conflict area. These developments for the countries under study should be viewed in the light of the European perspective which has contributed to peace and stability and encouraged political and economic reform. Demonstrated fulfilment of the Copenhagen accession criteria of 1993 with specific reference to ‘respect for and protection of minorities’ is of paramount importance for the countries in this study in the EU accession process;¹¹
2. wider educational context, in which education and training is seen as the primary tool for social inclusion, the promotion of diversity and tolerance, and the building of a sustainable democracy based on active citizen participation. Within the description of the wider educational context, specific attention will be focused on understanding existing institutional, structural, political and other obstacles to social inclusion;
3. specific educational context of reforms to pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development, in line with the move toward learning outcomes and study programmes built around the professional competences concept and in accordance with the key role of teachers in ensuring perceptible favourable outcomes from education and training reform initiatives. Analysis of this context

¹¹ http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen_en.htm (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

will also cover the specific regional challenges facing teacher education on inclusive education; elements that are reflected in attitudes to social inclusion and social cohesion in wider society.

2.1 General context – Social Inclusion and Diversity in a Post-Conflict Area

All of the countries involved in the study were exposed to some form of conflict in the period between the early 1990s and the present. The conflict ranged from open war, through ethnic-related violence at the peak of ethnic tension and oppression, to clashes within a single ethnic group motivated primarily by political differences and enabled by a weak rule of law and insufficient democratic culture.

The countries of the region are currently in a state of relative equilibrium although the situation is still unstable. Regional cooperation is on the increase through various trade agreements (such as Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)) and bilateral or multilateral cooperation schemes. These developments are further supported by: the DG Enlargement Regional Programs and Multi-Beneficiary IPA Programming; the related Regional Cooperation Council,¹² and particularly the Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital;¹³ the recent establishment of the South Eastern Europe Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning;¹⁴ and the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe¹⁵ which applies to Bulgaria and Romania as well as the countries in this study.

Mobility of people is also steadily rising for commercial, educational and private reasons. Although some specific administrative and political obstacles remain¹⁶ many of the Western Balkan countries¹⁷ benefitted from the lifting of visa regimes in December 2009.

The EU has identified policy areas and priorities relevant to inclusive education and training in the Enlargement Strategy 2008-2009 (EC, 2008b). While the Western Balkan countries are at various stages in EU membership process¹⁸ their progress can be tracked in their respective EC Progress Reports. Furthermore, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (EU DG EMPL) is also focussed on the issue of social inclusion within the *EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process*,¹⁹ with particular attention on the situation in the Western Balkans (within the national reports) and that of disadvantaged groups like children and Roma. This entity commissioned a series of independent reports completed in August 2008 and synthesised in the January 2009 publication: *Social Protection and Social Inclusion in the Western Balkans: A Synthesis Report* (EC, 2009). The report provides in-depth information, statistics and analysis on political, economic and demographic trends. This includes details of how the educational attainment analysed relates to labour market function; eligibility for, access to, and funding of social protection; general living conditions and groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion; access to pensions, healthcare and long-term care.

¹² <http://www.erisee.org/node/12> (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

¹³ <http://www.taskforcehumancapital.info/> (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

¹⁴ <http://www.seecel.hr/naslovnica/> (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

¹⁵ www.erisee.org (page accessed on 24 August 2009)

¹⁶ This is particularly the case between Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) and Serbia, due to Serbia not recognising Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) as an independent state.

¹⁷ Visa regimes were lifted on the 19th December 2009, for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia while visa regimes remain in place for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244).

¹⁸ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have the status of candidates, while the remaining countries (except for Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244) which has special status) have signed the Stabilisation and Association Agreements.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/index_en.htm (page accessed 24 August 2009)

These countries are all signatories to a number of international standard-setting documents, namely: the *Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (CoE, 1995a), (ratified by all countries apart from Kosovo);²⁰ the revised *European Social Charter* (CoE, 1995b); the *European Convention on Human Rights* (CoE, 1950); the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN, 1989); the *UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education* (UNESCO, 1960); and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UN, 2006).

Furthermore, the countries are all participants in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, presided over by Serbia until 1 July 2009 when Slovakia took over the yearly mandate.

However, occasional outbursts of ethnically motivated unrest or even violence are testament to the fact that lasting peace and stability will only be achieved with the long-term, strong and holistic commitment of all social actors.

A particular issue of concern in this respect is the overwhelming poverty and significant differences in development within and across these countries. Low educational attainment in the population in general is one of the key factors of poverty. This is primarily viewed as a cause of poverty but is in fact also a consequence of a situation that is further exacerbated in certain ethnic groups and other minorities.

‘POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS INDICATE THAT ETHNICITY IS ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS OF SHAPING POVERTY ... [THERE ARE] BIG DISCREPANCIES IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION’ (ETF, 2007, PAGE 4)

These findings in essence reiterate those of other international or intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank (World Bank, 2007) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2004) that ethnicity is a factor in limiting access to education and one that is particularly difficult to counteract given the political context. Additionally, the reports underline an even more complex situation for Roma who form an ethnic minority that faces multifaceted disadvantage of long standing in each of the countries. It also is important to stress that the issue of poverty and social exclusion is a pan-European issue, a fact further supported by the EU decision to dub 2010 the *European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion* including the countries of the Western Balkans in the list of participant nations.²¹

This brings us to the issue of obstacles in access to quality education. These obstacles may be of a financial, institutional or procedural, structural and socio-cultural, or political nature. The latter classification was developed for this study in order to adequately address the particular issues of the region.

Financial obstacles can include the lack of sufficient family or student resources for accessing specific levels of education (e.g. higher education where tuition fees are charged); the inability to access the necessary materials and resources for quality learning (from books and computers to sufficient space for independent learning); the lack of funds for maintenance while studying (which may force students to seek paid work or even to abandon their studies).

Institutional and procedural obstacles may include explicit tracking (i.e. explicit rules which prevent vertical and horizontal mobility between levels and types of institutions) but also implicit tracking due to specific elements of the transition procedures from one stage of education to the next.

²⁰ Albania 1999, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2000, Croatia 1997, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 1997, Montenegro 2001, Serbia 2001.

²¹ Article 11 of the Decision No 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

Structural obstacles include problems with insufficient institutional networks (e.g. limited or non-existent possibilities in rural or underdeveloped areas), problems with transportation to schools, but also inappropriate or non-existent infrastructure for pupils and students with special needs (e.g. aids to learning adapted for pupils with visual or hearing impairments).

Socio-cultural and linguistic obstacles include specific procedures for enrolment, progress and completion which do not take into account individual differences in socio-economic, cultural or linguistic backgrounds. These may result in segregation as pre-school testing of children assumes working knowledge of the majority language and is therefore essentially discriminatory to minority children who may not have the necessary skills.

Political obstacles frequently arise from omissions of action rather than overtly discriminatory action. This apparent lack of overt action does not, however, reduce the exclusive impact of political inaction and lack of focus on constructive legislative and fiscal support for inclusive education in many of the countries in the study. The centrality and influence of this political neglect effectively condones exclusion at all levels throughout society and is particularly difficult to overcome as it would require a combination of democratic social pressure, collaboration between various public sectors (health, social welfare and education) and international pressure from the EU and beyond.

Given the various obstacles and their potential multiplicative impact, it is evident that a holistic approach to quality education is essential for groups faced with complex disadvantages such as: (1) refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose integration problems become increasingly 'invisible to the system' through the frequent changes in the administrative status of such persons (e.g. some become citizens of the host country), the concentration of refugees in 'collective centres' far from the eyes of the general public; and (2) Roma, who suffer enduring multifaceted deprivation, stigmatised by the deep-rooted prejudice of majority populations and essentially forming a minority wherever they live. Furthermore, the strong impact of the lack of education on poverty is further exacerbated through low employment opportunities for socio-economically vulnerable ethnic groups (Fetsi et al., 2007) and particularly for young people who could escape recurrent generational poverty given sufficient time and opportunities in the worlds of education and work. It should be noted that the potential public non-financial benefits of education (OECD, 2007) also include crime reduction, democratisation, improved public health, political stability and respect for human rights on top of poverty reduction. However, these potential benefits cannot be achieved unless there is assurance of an education system accessible to all and structured to promote inter-cultural dialogue and equity in learning outcomes. Finally, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that inclusive education and training is a necessary element of an inclusive society but is insufficient in itself. Additional measures in other public sectors such as social welfare and health are necessary to support education.

2.2 Educational context – Education as a Tool for Democratisation, Stabilisation, Inclusion and the Promotion of Tolerance and Intercultural Understanding

The countries under study all embarked on a ‘root-and-branch’ reform of their education systems as part of the overall political and economic transition and the EU membership process. In some cases, EU and international trends and processes - the Bologna process for higher education or the Copenhagen process for VET – also impacted on these reforms. Some are also affected by international attention and strong donor interest in a particular issue, as was the case with the Decade of Roma. The countries have also undergone policy and strategy development processes leading to changes in education legislation. In some cases, this has been followed by reforms to supportive policy instruments such as funding mechanisms. Local or national NGOs, regional networks of experts and policy think tanks were all strongly involved in these developments during the early stages or in providing parallel support.

In the past there was a significant lack of comparable and reliable data on education but the situation has somewhat improved in recent years with an extensive amount of literature produced in the form of regional or national studies and projects, assessments of international and intergovernmental organisations and national reports. A number of projects and activities touching upon the issue of social inclusion and education are ongoing in the region or have been completed recently. These include the Advancing Educational Inclusion and Quality in South East Europe²² project of the South East European Educational Network. The Open Society Institute has provided support to civil society and has produced analytical reports including the ongoing Monitoring Education for Roma.²³ Meanwhile, the Roma Education Fund (REF)²⁴ has provided direct support in terms of scholarships for Roma students and has made sustained efforts toward building policy capacity in the region. The work of both these entities has contributed to the development of inclusive policy and inclusive societies. There have also been a number of recent projects focusing on teacher education, such as Enhancing the Professional Development of Education Practitioners and Teaching/Learning Practices in SEE Countries²⁵ and the Regional Tuning of Teacher Education Curricula in the Western Balkans (Pantić, 2008).

Such regional activities are reliant upon (or should at least take into account) the work of various international or intergovernmental organisations on the issue, such as:

- OECD, notably the analysis and recommendations offered in: *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning* (OECD, 2007); *No More Failures – Ten Steps to Equity in Education* (Field et al, 2007) (which recommends 10 steps related to structure, practice and resources in education); *Teachers’ Matter – Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (McKensie et al., 2005), which underlines the importance of both pre-service and in-service training and also the need to make teacher education more flexible and responsive to the needs of schools and pupils; the *Teacher Education for Diversity* project 2008-2010²⁶ - an ongoing project focusing on common challenges and responses in the OECD countries in terms of teacher training for increasingly culturally diverse societies; and the OECD

²² <http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/> (page accessed 7 August 2009)

²³ http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/publications/monitoring_20061218/monitoring_20061218.pdf (page accessed 7 August 2009)

²⁴ www.romaeducationfund.hu (page accessed 24th December 2009)

²⁵ <http://www.see-educoop.net/portal/tesee.htm> (page accessed 7 August 2009)

²⁶ http://www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_41651733_1_1_1_1,00.html (page accessed 7 August 2009)

Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS,²⁷ especially the latest report *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS* (OECD, 2009) focusing on: teacher professional development, beliefs, attitudes and practices, teacher appraisal and feedback, and school leadership. Over 70 000 teachers and school principals were surveyed in 23 countries as part of the project;

- ETF, notably the aforementioned *Social Inclusion of Ethnic Groups Through Education and Training: Elements of Good Practice* (ETF, 2007) and the work of EURAC for ETF on *Access to Education, Training and Employment of Ethnic Minorities in the Western Balkans* (2006),²⁸ that identifies three different models of approach to the education of minorities and the use of minority languages in education;²⁹
- Council of Europe, through its focus on intercultural dialogue;³⁰ minority languages - in particular the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages* (CoE, 1992); education for democratic citizenship³¹ (where a number of recommendations, studies and toolkits have been developed); education of Roma³², with a variety of activities and recommendations including the Recommendation of the Council of Ministers to the Member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe (CoE, 2000); as well as *How All Teachers Can Support Citizenship and Human Rights Education: A Framework for the Development of Competences* (Brett et al., 2009) which focuses on approximately 15 core competences teachers need to put democratic citizenship and human rights into practice in the classroom, the school and the wider community;
- EURYDICE, the key source of data on education in Europe, which publishes thematic studies, such as: *Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe: Measures to Foster Communication with Immigrant Families and Heritage Language Teaching for Immigrant Children* (Eurydice, 2009a), *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities* (Eurydice, 2009b), *Levels of Autonomy and Responsibilities of Teachers in Europe* (Eurydice, 2008) and *School Autonomy in Europe. Policies and Measures* (Eurydice, 2007);
- UNESCO, in particular its *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (UNESCO, 2009) which provides an overview of developments in the area of inclusive education (including an extensive list of relevant international conventions and declarations), addresses the issues of inclusion and quality in education, development of an inclusive curriculum, the role of policy makers, and, most relevant for the current study, the role of teachers; and
- work within the peer learning cluster focussed on teachers and teacher education under the Knowledge System for Lifelong Learning.³³

²⁷ http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_38052160_1_1_1_1,00.html (page accessed 7 August 2009)

²⁸ <http://www.eurac.edu/about/projects/2006/index.htm?year=2006&which=693> (page accessed 7 August 2009)

²⁹ (1) The entire curriculum is taught in the minority language, usually achieved by the establishment of separate schools or classes for teaching in the minority language, which essentially leads to segregation. (2) The entire 'regular' school curriculum is taught in the majority language, while minority pupils can take additional courses in their mother tongue, which increases their already high workload and openly segregates them. (3) The third model can be called 'bilingual education', in which mother tongue and the minority language are used in parallel, with divergent success and impact. This approach is rarely used in the countries under study.

³⁰ <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/> (page accessed 7 August 2009)

³¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_EN.asp (page accessed 7 August 2009)

³² http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/default_en.asp (page accessed 7 August 2009)

³³ <http://www.kslll.net/peerlearningclusters/clusterdetails.cfm?id=14> (page accessed 7 August 2009)

This extensive list of international activities, analyses, policy developments and even legislative changes all support a strong focus on teacher competences. This perspective can be justified in several ways:

- Education system reform toward inclusive education is moving from the system level downwards in the countries under study. Legislation and strategies are now in place, many countries have well designed implementation mechanisms and new curricula are being developed and adopted for pre-school, primary and secondary education. The focus of reform is gradually shifting onto the interaction between pupils and teachers in the individual school and classroom. The change to more inclusive education will simply not happen if the key actors of the process, the teachers, are not equipped with the necessary attitudes, skills, knowledge and motivations within a supportive environment
- The global economic crisis, the economic situation of the countries in question and the intense competition for public funds between education and other public sectors (health, security, pensions) make it highly unlikely that additional resources will be allocated to the sector. The increased pressure for reform will not be reflected in significant budget increases for outstanding infrastructure improvements, in terms of: improved access to existing buildings and classrooms for all students; an extended network of schools in remote areas; and the development of teaching materials fitted to the learning styles and abilities of each student. This means the necessary education reforms are even more heavily reliant on those motivated and skilled teachers who are: responsive to the needs of the community and of the individual child; able to adopt new approaches to educating children from varied backgrounds; and willing and able to participate actively in the development of new curricula or new policy documents and instruments.

The strong EU and international focus on teacher education through the work of the EU, OECD and Council of Europe has led to significant advances, but the region is still lagging behind in terms of relevant analysis of the competences required for the effective, efficient and, most importantly, inclusive teacher. So far, just two projects have focussed on teacher education in the countries under study. The first of these: *Enhancing the Professional Development of Education Practitioners and Teaching/Learning Practices in SEE countries* highlighted the issue of insufficient practical teacher training. The document showed that while teachers in South Eastern Europe (SEE) receive theoretical training on subject knowledge and skills within their pre-service training programmes, they are given little practical experience of teaching in a real-life classroom. As a result, the key recommendation of the project was to ensure that teacher education study programmes focus on competences relevant to the actual practice of teaching in a given environment.

It was this recommendation that inspired the *Regional Tuning of Teacher Education Curricula*.³⁴ This project identified some of the gaps between existing teacher training and the teaching competences needed in practice. It was encouraging to find that teachers valued competences such as commitment to equality, support of learning of all pupils and promotion of tolerance as the most important elements of teacher training for inclusive education. However, detailed inspections of some existing initial teacher training programmes showed actual coverage of those competences to be rare and sometimes even completely lacking. These findings suggest that changes in teacher awareness of the 'new' topics in education and school practices are not necessarily reflected in adequate changes in teacher preparation programmes.

The Tuning project also showed that little value was placed on the importance of competences pertinent to teacher participation in development of the education system, their own institutions or cooperation with the

³⁴ http://www.cep.edu.rs/eng/files/Tuning_Teacher_Education_Western_Balkans.pdf (page accessed 7 August 2009)

community. Teachers need to develop the competences required for inclusive classroom practices, and teacher education policies and programmes therefore need to include elements that increase teacher capacity to deal with inclusion-related factors that reach beyond the classroom and the school into areas such as parental and community involvement. This lack of a wider vision is one of the major challenges facing the promotion of inclusive school practices.

The low value given to teacher participation in system-wide debate on reform also implies a significant lack of a strong professional teacher voice of in terms of active teacher trade unions or other professional associations. While unions in the region tend to be quite vocal on issues of general employee rights, they are rather weak in terms of expertise on education reform, teacher education and inclusive education.

Furthermore, the lack of frameworks of standards for teacher training programmes, and the fragmented organisation of these programmes (pre-primary, class teachers and subject teachers³⁵) form systemic obstacles to relevant and effective teacher education. The fragmentation diverts attention from the pedagogical and didactic education of teachers and hampers the development of a multidisciplinary focus on education in general and education research in particular. Finally, this region is facing a significant challenge to reinstate the good standing of the teaching profession³⁶ in terms of respect, remuneration and wider social status, a situation also common to many countries outside the region.

³⁵ In the regional context, 'class teachers' refers to teachers in the first few years of primary education (the first 4 of a total 8 years) who teach the full spectrum of subjects on the curriculum. They are trained at teacher education colleges or faculties. 'Subject teachers' are teachers of particular subjects (mathematics, biology, history etc) and they are usually trained at separate faculties (faculty of mathematics or natural sciences, faculty of history or social sciences) and generally have insufficient pedagogical and didactic training, in both teaching theory and practice. Pre-primary teachers are trained in separate institutions of a non-university type in most of the countries under study..

³⁶ The 'teaching profession' includes teachers, head-teachers and those in higher management posts.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Key Concepts

For the purposes of this study *Mapping Policies and Practices for the Preparation of Teachers for Inclusive Education in Contexts of Social and Cultural Diversity*, the research team adopted common definitions of various key concepts. The definitions are based on academic research in the field and have been selected to reflect the common understanding of the concepts reached between the ETF and the researchers conducting the study. This report does not propose these definitions as norms for the study of teacher education or inclusive education in general, but they are included here to help interpret the findings of the present research.

3.1.1 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a much researched topic that involves a number of challenges for policy-making and implementation processes. Conceptualisations of inclusive education vary from narrower views as ‘the attempt to educate persons with intellectual disabilities by integrating them as closely as possible into the regular structures of the educational system’, (Michailakis and Reich, 2009) to broader definitions as a ‘guiding principle helping to accomplish quality Education for All (EFA) – education systems that benefit from diversity, aiming to build a more just, democratic society’ (Acedo, 2008).

Inclusive education is broadly understood in this study to be the process by which schools attempt to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring curriculum organisation and provision, and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. This process enables schools to increase their capacity to accept all those pupils from the local community who wish to attend and in so doing reduce all forms of exclusion and degradation of students on the basis of disability, ethnicity, or anything that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Peček *et al*, 2006). Hence, inclusive education must become a mainstreamed general policy and practice in education and not a specific intervention addressing any one particular disadvantaged group. In this broader sense, inclusion is a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion, whereby participation means greater recognition, acceptance and respect along with inclusion in the learning process and social activities in a way that enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to society.

Teachers also have a wider professional role to play beyond their direct personal impact on an individual school operating within various levels of the education system, including the municipalities. Decentralisation of the education systems in the Western Balkan countries implies increased autonomy for schools, which may in turn lead to increased rights for professional decision-making by teachers informed by their wider evaluation of the socio-cultural ends of education and schooling. Liston and Zeichner (1990) argue that such reflection need not focus only on implicit social and cultural frameworks but also on the institutional features of schooling. Teaching professionals, they argue, must be able to analyse and change particular institutional arrangements and working conditions, especially those that might obstruct the implementation of their aims (Liston and Zeichner 1990:5).

3.1.2 Teacher Competences for Inclusion

A number of authors including Michailakis and Reich (2009) claim that there is a specific body of knowledge for working with 'special' children that needs to be adequately covered during teacher preparation. This may involve gaining an understanding of the socio-cultural factors that produce individual differences, or specialist knowledge about disability and children's learning needs, awareness of educational and social issues that can affect children's learning, and so on. Another distinct current stance, according to Florian and Rouse (2009), is that teacher competences for inclusive educational practices should include skills relevant to the improvement of teaching and learning for all including the capacity to reduce barriers to learning and participation as inclusion is not only about 'special' children. According to this view, teacher competence on inclusion should involve a multifaceted pedagogy that recognises how decisions informing teaching should take account of: children's individual characteristics; the learning that takes place outside school; and learners' previous knowledge, individual and cultural experiences and interests (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

This study adopts a broader view of competence as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Assumption 1 in Annex 4). Even the most comprehensive coverage of relevant themes is unlikely to anticipate every type of difficulty teachers might encounter in their professional lives. It is essential that teachers accept responsibility for improving the learning and participation of *all* children in their classes in order to develop teacher competences for inclusive education. For this, teachers need to develop competences that involve knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach equitably and to promote the learning of all pupils. Moreover, teachers need to be able to seek and use the support of other actors who can serve as valuable resources in inclusive education, such as support staff, parents, communities, school authorities and relevant others. Hence, pre-service and in-service teacher education and training should be aligned to inclusive education approaches in order to build the teacher capacities necessary to make diversity work.

3.1.3 Teacher Preparation

Teacher education in the Western Balkan countries (and elsewhere) has often assumed that schools are mono-ethnic institutions with homogeneous class compositions. It has been increasingly recognised that teachers need to be better prepared to recognise, value and deal with diversity, as well as to deal with issues of discrimination and disadvantage in education and training, and work with students and parents from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds. The present study explores to what extent such inclusive approaches are actually adopted in the existing policies and practices of pre-service and in-service teacher preparation in the countries under study.

Policies are understood in this study to refer to formal, governmental policies, regulations and legislation, as well as the actual implementation of these in existing practice by different relevant stakeholders in teacher preparation for inclusive education.

Pre-service teacher education refers to education that teacher candidates are expected to undergo in order to qualify for teaching. This involves both programmes specifically designed for future teachers, and programmes for a disciplinary area that equivalent to a school subject, which may or may not have a special track for teachers. Preparation of teachers based on competences for inclusion in real contexts of diversity is linked to higher education reform of in the Western Balkans, primarily within the framework of the Bologna Process.

In-service teacher training and development refers to education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers following their initial professional certification, intended mainly or exclusively

to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes in order that they can educate children more effectively in contexts of social and cultural diversity.

3.2 Research Questions and Study Design

The research design follows on from the key concepts described above and the assumptions adopted for the study based on an extensive literature review as presented in Annex 4. The following section describes the research questions and how they are explored in this study.

To reach the objectives set in the study, namely, (1) to analyse policies and practices regarding teacher pre-service training and in-service professional development schemes at the country level, and (2) to identify issues, challenges and good practice with regard to the skills and competences required for inclusive education practices by teachers from primary and secondary education; the following research questions are addressed by the study:

1. What teacher competences are needed for inclusive education in situations of social and cultural diversity?
2. What is the current situation regarding the inputs, processes and outcomes of a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education?
3. How can the situation regarding a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education be improved?

3.2.1 Research Question 1: Teacher Competences Relevant for Inclusive Education

Exploration of the first research question about teacher competences relevant for inclusive practices, is based on the concept of competence understood as a combination of knowledge, skills and dispositions (Assumption 1 in Annex 4) and a belief that teachers and other education professionals are themselves an important source of information on exactly what the competences relevant for inclusive practices in situations of social and cultural diversity mean to their work (Assumption 2 in Annex 4). Thus, this report examines the extent to which internationally recognised elements of competence for inclusion are exemplified in participant responses collected in focus groups and interviews with teachers working in environments of diversity, but also those of school principals, parents and community members, government representatives, teacher educators and relevant NGO and donor representatives.

A special instrument was developed to serve as a starting point for discussions with teachers in the focus groups. The table of competences for inclusion (Annex 3) was developed using the relevant items from a previously conducted project *Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans*, key European documents and international research. It thus combines the theoretical assumptions and formulation arrived at in the regional context. The table was used as an initial list in the focus groups to prompt discussion on how those formulations translate into daily teaching practices, the competences teachers need to develop, the best way to develop them, and so on.

It is important to note that the information collected in the focus groups was used critically to enrich understanding of how teachers perceive competence for inclusion compared to a theoretically based ideal and to provide context-relevant information. It was complemented by information collected from other relevant stakeholders such as teacher educators, school principals and support staff, community and parent representatives as already described above.

3.2.2 Research Question 2: Mapping of Policies and Practices for Teacher Preparation

Exploration of the second research question on the current situation of pre-service and in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education is approached from the perspectives of general pluralism and equal opportunities (Assumption 3 in Annex 4) and considers the importance of context for the development of inclusive dispositions (Assumption 4 in Annex 4). In the exploration of current teacher preparation, it is important to examine the extent to which all inputs, processes and outcomes include inclusion-relevant elements (e.g. individualised approaches to learning) while also attempting to identify any specific foci on issues relevant to dealing with students at risk of exclusion. The report thus concentrates on analysis of existing teacher preparation policies and practices and to what extent social inclusion related provisions are mainstreamed in policies relevant to inclusive education and teacher preparation in particular. There is further examination of whether the existing policies and practices contain implicit barriers to inclusive education, and whether they contain an affirmative focus on groups that have long been marginalised in the region.

Policy mapping involved the collection of information on the general context of teacher preparation for inclusion (e.g., policies on inclusion for potentially disadvantaged groups in education and training, general provisions for teacher preparation, etc.) and policies and regulations specifically referring to teacher preparation on inclusion (e.g., any provisions referring specifically to inclusion in the requirements for entry into teaching, teacher standards, induction, licensing and promotion).

The mapping of practices presented in this report includes an overview of both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation and development. This was accomplished through an online survey, by means of desk research, and in focus groups and interviews with relevant stakeholders. The approach was similar to that used in policy mapping; searching relevant data sources (catalogues of in-service programmes, existing secondary sources of relevant information on pre-service teacher preparation and in-service programmes implemented by various local and international NGOs, identification of other forms of continuing and sometimes informal professional development such as learning through networking, peer evaluation). These issues were listed in grids developed to guide data collection across the countries.

An online survey was developed to collect data on pre-service teacher preparation programmes. Research evidence on programme characteristics that help student teachers develop competences for inclusion (Assumptions 5 and 6 in Annex 4) were used to design online survey questions on course units, practical experiences, opportunities for interaction with families, critical reflection, discussion and dialogue, and beliefs about the nature of knowledge.

The data collected through desk research and the survey and the mapping of both policies and practices were complemented with qualitative data collected in individual and group interviews, and focus groups with information-rich policy-makers, course designers, teacher educators, teachers, school principals, community representatives and parents. These strategies provided opportunities for follow-up on issues identified in the desk research, granting comprehensive insight into various stakeholder perspectives on inclusive education practices and teacher roles.

3.2.3 Research Question 3: How Teacher Preparation could be Improved

The third research question asks how existing pre-service and in-service teacher education policies and practices could be improved to further help teachers develop competences for inclusion and considers the relevance of cross-national research for policy-making (Assumption 7 in Annex 4). This report discusses the information collected in mapping existing policies and practices with a view to identifying opportunities for

improvements bearing in mind desired competences for inclusive education identified in international research and the barriers identified in each country context.

On the basis of findings from both field work and desk research, the authors have compiled a number of recommendations for different stakeholders with the support of an editorial team of experts on inclusion and teacher training in the region. The recommendations primarily aim to indicate potential areas for improvement in pre-service and in-service teacher education. However, these recommendations and the report itself aim to serve as discussion material for wider policy debate on teacher competences in the context of social and cultural diversity.

The recommendations have been grouped according to their relevance for different stakeholders: policy-makers; teacher educators and course designers; and teachers. Also, examples of best practice on inclusion are highlighted and discussed in terms of their relevance and transferability across the region throughout the study.

3.3 Research methodology

Throughout the study a predominantly qualitative research strategy was used, as it allowed for a more effective mapping of policies and practices by enabling certain important questions about relevance, unintended effects and impact of policies and practice to be answered. Qualitative approaches have the advantage of allowing greater diversity in responses and also have the capacity to adapt to new developments or issues during the research process itself. The approaches applied by this study, in fact show all the characteristics of qualitative research as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982):

- Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument
- Qualitative research is descriptive
- Qualitative researchers are concerned with processes rather than simply with outcomes
- Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively rather than use a priori questions or hypotheses to be tested
- Meaning, in the sense of the subject's own perspectives, thoughts, assumptions, world views etc and in their own words and minds, is of essential concern to the approach

All these characteristics can be observed in the qualitative data collection techniques used in the study, as follows:

- Collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents collected through desk research
- Qualitative interviews conducted in the course of fieldwork
- Focus groups conducted in the course of fieldwork.

3.3.1 Desk research phase

Desk research served as background to the field research carried out subsequently. It drew on a comprehensive overview of contemporary research in inclusive education, in particular in relation to teacher roles and the competences needed to support inclusiveness, EU policy and legislative and national documents. It thus provided input to the development of country missions and to the qualitative part of the research.

The desk research covered three thematic areas:

- Context analysis
- Policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation
- Policies and practices for in-service teacher education and continuing professional development

The context analysis aimed to explain the overall policy and legislative context in which teacher preparation and inclusive education were embedded. It focused on the system of education, human and minority rights and inclusion and exclusion in education. The analysis of policies and practices for pre-service teacher preparation aimed to provide information on legislation and regulation of pre-service teacher preparation programmes. It focused on the elements related to competences for inclusive education incorporated in the process for obtaining a formal degree in teaching, the organization and management of pre-service programmes, programme design, arrangements for mentoring of students during school practice, process of recruitment, professional standards and the promotion procedure. The analysis of policies and practices for in-service teacher education and continuing professional development considers the general standing of the teaching profession in a country, including recruitment, professional standards, promotion, regulations and the offer of in-service development practice programmes that are relevant to the development of teacher competences for inclusive education. It focuses on describing practices, the proportion of programmes focusing on inclusive education (in particular, with information about providers, content of the programme and, if available, the profile and number of participants so far), application procedures for such programmes and other forms of in-service development and incentives that may be in place to motivate teachers to develop their competence by taking part in in-service programmes in general and programmes focusing on inclusive education practices in particular.

The desk research involved a review of different primary source documents, with secondary sources in desk research used in a critical manner. The materials reviewed in the desk research phase included but were not limited to:

- Relevant legislative and sub-legal documents
- National/governmental strategies focusing on inclusion or education, with particular focus on role of teachers and teacher training
- Policies and regulations related to teachers
- Catalogues and similar descriptions of in-service programmes
- Any other relevant analysis performed by other organisations or individuals (secondary sources).

The desk research was undertaken by country team members between July and September 2009. Relevant national legislation, strategies and policies, most of which were available online, were analysed. Additionally,

through consultations with different system-level decision makers, representatives of institutions with a mandate in education and NGOs, a large number of analyses and reports were made available to the research team.

3.3.2 Field research phase

Field research, which is at the heart of qualitative research, provided an opportunity to discuss, with primary and secondary teachers, teacher educators, schools principals and NGO activists, current programmes and trends in pre-service and in-service development of teachers for inclusive education. Also discussed were country-specific needs and barriers to and expectations of inclusive education, particularly from the perspective of teacher professional training. The country mission took into account a variety of target groups and appropriate tools to reach the intended outcome.

During the field research phase the team aimed to cover the widest possible territory and to include representatives from different regions. The selection was based on agreed target groups as described below.

The country mission concentrated on reaching three key target groups, namely:

- Teacher educators and trainers in pre-service programmes
- Teacher educators and trainers in in-service programmes
- Teachers
- Parents and community members.
- Teachers for interviewing were selected to cover primary and secondary school teachers. Interviewed teachers were selected to compose a group of teachers with different experience in terms of inclusive education practices. Thus, there were teachers who worked with SEN and RAE students on a daily basis in their classes; teachers who went through different type of additional training relevant to inclusive education; teachers who had no practical experience with SEN or RAE students; and teachers who did not receive additional training.
- Parents were selected to cover a variety of possible socioeconomic backgrounds of students. Therefore, parents of students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, visual impairment, physical disability, intellectual difficulties and RAE were interviewed.
- In selecting community members and schools for interviews with school principals and support staff, the aim was to cover the entire Montenegro territory. The research team chose the capital city, Podgorica; municipalities in the North, Bijelo Polje, Kolašin and Nikšić; and municipalities in the South, Herceg Novi and Bar. When choosing schools, additional criteria were used to cover all education levels from pre-school to secondary level, as well as to cover differences in experience with inclusion; thus, selected were schools with high number of SEN or RAE students, schools with several years of experience in inclusive education and schools that were relatively new to the process of inclusion.

The in-field research was also complemented by an e-survey which targeted teacher educators in teacher training programmes for class teachers, subject teachers and teacher trainers in in-service programmes. The e-survey was distributed through contacts with management and teaching staff at the faculties that train teachers in Montenegro. The teacher educators and trainers were surveyed to investigate the following:

- Whether competences for inclusive education occupy a specific area in teacher training programmes

- The degree of mainstreaming in the programmes and the degree of mainstreaming of inclusion issues throughout the programmes
- The effectiveness of existing teacher training programmes in developing inclusive education, according to teacher perceptions
- The competences considered necessary for inclusive education according to respondent perceptions.

Thus, information relevant for developing pre-service and in-service programmes for teacher training was collected from teacher educators, teachers and student teachers. Where necessary, information-rich individual teacher educators and trainers were interviewed to add in-depth views and elaborate on the above-mentioned issues relevant to teacher education and training. As part of the field research, focus groups were held with teachers experienced in inclusive education that covered a variety of settings and issues relevant to inclusive education, specifically:

- Perceptions of what competences are needed for inclusive education
- Perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service preparation for inclusive practices in education
- Application of inclusive practices (the kind of things an inclusive teacher does in and out of the classroom)
- Beliefs about students, knowledge, learning and educability.

These focus groups were organised on the premise that teachers as practitioners with hands-on experience are in a position to evaluate both pre-service and in-service training and evaluate the importance of teachers' beliefs in shaping practice and performance.

Other parent and community member focus groups discussed the following issues:

- Perceptions of the competences necessary for inclusion and teacher role in promoting inclusiveness
- What are teachers' roles in promoting inclusiveness information about practices and issues associated with their cooperation with schools (e.g., student wellbeing, discipline, achievement, particular educational needs)
- How should teachers promote inclusiveness
- How do teachers and inclusive practices affect students in particular and society in general
- The extent to which they can influence decisions made at school level

The parent and community member focus groups enabled these stakeholders to elaborate their views on inclusive education. The rationale for their inclusion was that they may be able to provide support or pressure for or against inclusion (e.g., parents demanding that their child does not go to the same class as a RAE child or community members expressing anger that a child with cerebral palsy cannot attend a local school because of the stairs and so has to attend a residential school 200 km away).

The secondary target groups for the field research were as follows:

- School principals and school support staff (pedagogues, psychologists, etc)
- Local government representatives
- System-level policy decision makers
- Student teachers
- NGO and donor representatives (providing additional training opportunities in inclusive education and opportunities to teach and to learn from experience in pilot inclusive education programmes).

Apart from the student teachers, who were surveyed through an online e-survey tool, the secondary target groups were mainly interviewed in person or via phone or email. Selected individuals were targeted to provide information and their views on the relevance of teacher competences in ensuring inclusive education practices. Additionally, they provided insights into how they saw their own roles in ensuring the development of teacher competences for inclusive education, in support of teacher training in inclusive practices and developing means for further enhancing teacher competences for inclusive education.

School principals and school support services were interviewed to discuss how they see their roles in supporting teachers in developing competences for inclusion and inclusive practices. The local government representatives were interviewed to provide insights into the issues of relevance for inclusive education provided at the local level. They were also asked about the support for inclusive education that they can or cannot provide and about the role assigned to teachers in creating inclusive education in their local environment. System-level policy decision makers are key stakeholders in terms of ensuring national policies on inclusive education and deciding teacher roles and teacher competences within such policies. They were interviewed to discuss the existence or non-existence of such policies, desired policies in this area and the means for implementing such policies. Students were e-surveyed to discuss their views, beliefs and attitudes to inclusive education and the need to include inclusive education competences in their training as future teachers. NGOs and donors in Montenegro were interviewed to learn about their views on the current provision of teacher education for inclusive education, but more importantly, on their practices in providing support to teachers in developing inclusive competences and practices, both through formal courses and through experiential learning in pilot programmes.

The response rate from all the targeted groups and individual participants was excellent. The only group with a lower, unsatisfactory response rate was that of student teachers; the reasons could be the subject of further research into their motivation, active participation in their studies, preparation for their future work, etc.

All of the interviewed groups and individuals are described in detail below.

3.4 Participants

Respondents were selected through a purposive sampling approach, to identify information-rich individuals from relevant stakeholder groups and ensure a variety of perspectives. The research was conducted between August and November 2009 (preparation in August, research during September and October and analysis in November). In the course of the fieldwork six focus groups were organised:

- With elementary school teachers (1 focus group). The group consisted of 21 first-grade and subject teachers and representatives of school pedagogues and psychologists from four elementary schools (Štampar Makarije, Pavle Rovinsk, Savo Pejanovi and Dr Dragiša Ivanović).
- With secondary school teachers (1 focus group). The group consisted of eight participants (from Slobodan Škerović state gymnasium and Luča private gymnasium).
- With parents (4 focus group). The 39 parents were selected as follows:
 - ◊ Štampar Makarije elementary school: 8 parents of students with development difficulties
 - ◊ Savo Pejanović elementary school: 8 parents of students with development difficulties
 - ◊ Mileva Lajović Lalatović elementary school: 8 parents of students with disabilities or of RAE children
 - ◊ Konik Camp: 15 parents of RAE children attending 3 schools (Savo Pejanovic, Marko Miljanov and Božidar Vuković Podgoričanin central school and satellite centre).

The focus groups with parents included parents of children with disabilities (ADHD, autism, visual disability, physical disability, intellectual disabilities) and of RAE children.

A total of 38 additional individual interviews were carried out by the research team.

School managers (principles and/or deputy principles) and support staff (pedagogues) were interviewed from a range of schools in Montenegro (the principal of Slobodan Škerović gymnasium, the principal of Luča private gymnasium, the pedagogue of Milan Vuković elementary school in Herceg-Nov, the principal and pedagogue of Mileva Lajović elementary school in Lalatović-Nikšić, the principal of Đina Vrbica pre-school, the psychologist of Dušan Korać elementary school in Bijelo Polje, the principal of Pavle Rovinski elementary school, the principal and deputy principal of Štampar Makarije elementary school, the deputy principal of Savo Pejanović elementary school, the principal of Vaso Aligrudić secondary electro-technical vocational school and special pedagogues in Đina Vrbica pre-school).

Teacher educators in different training fields were interviewed, in particular two trainers in active learning, three inclusive education trainers and one trainer in Roma programmes.

A wide range of system-level decision makers were interviewed, including the Deputy Minister of Education and Science, the President of the General Education Council, the Director of the Bureau for Education Services, the Manager of the Centre for Continuous Professional Development attached to the Bureau for Education Services, the Director of the Examinations Centre and the Director of the Centre for Vocational Education.

Local government representatives were interviewed in Podgorica (Secretary for Social Affairs), Bijelo Polje (President of the Parliament of Bijelo Polje), Kolašin (Main Administrator), Nikšić (Secretary for Social Affairs and General Legal Matters), Herceg Novi (Secretary for Social Affairs) and Bar (Secretary for Social Affairs).

Relevant NGOs and donors were interviewed as follows: the Director of Our Initiative-Union of Parents of Children with Disabilities, the Montenegro Red Cross, the Foundation Open Society Institute-Representative Office Montenegro (FOSI-ROM), the Foundation for Roma Scholarship, the Ray of Hope-Union of Parents of Children with Disabilities of Pljevlja, Save the Children UK, the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) and an independent researcher in the field of RAE rights.

The e-survey was distributed amongst teachers and other staff at several schools, as follows:

- Elementary schools: Kekec (Sutomor), Dušan Korać (Bijelo Polje), Risto Manojlović (Kolašin), Savo Pejanović, Štampar Makarije and Pavle Rovinski (Podgorica), Braća Labudović and Mileva Lajović (Lalatović), Luka Simonović (Nikšić), Druga Škola (Budva) and Ilija Kišić (Herceg Novi).
- Secondary schools: Slobodan Škerović gymnasium, Luča private gymnasium, Secondary Medicine School of Podgorica, Secondary Tourism and Trade School of Podgorica and Secondary Vocational School of Pljevlja.
- Pre-school teacher education institutions, teacher education institutions, Faculty of Pedagogy, Faculty of Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Art and Music Academy of Cetinje .

In total, there were 87 complete responses to the e-survey.

4. OVERALL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION CONTEXT

4.1 Context

Montenegro has been independent since 3 June 2006. According to data from the latest Montenegro Statistics Institute (MONSTAT) census of 2003, Montenegro has 620,145 inhabitants. The national breakdown of the population is as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ▪ Montenegrins 43.16% | ▪ Muslims 3.97% |
| ▪ Serbs 31.99% | ▪ Croats 1.10% |
| ▪ Bosnians 7.77% | ▪ Roma 0.42% |
| ▪ Albanians 5.03% | ▪ Others 6.56% |

The government launched all-encompassing education reforms in 2000, which resulted in changes in legislation on general education, pre-school education, primary education, high school education, vocational education and adult education. The reform of the education system was intended to introduce new models of high-quality education. Its underlying principles were decentralisation, equal opportunities, choice according to individual abilities, European standards, the application of a quality system, human resource development, lifelong learning, flexibility, possibilities for transfer between school programmes, curriculum compatibility with education level and the gradual introduction of changes (OSI, 2007).

In practice, the principles introduced under the education reform have led to the following:

- Devolution of certain functions from the Ministry of Education and Science to newly established institutions, including the Bureau for Education Services, the Centre for Vocational Education and the Examinations Centre
- Increased involvement and support of parents and the local community in the work of schools
- Introduction of quality indicators and standards for the first time in the history of Montenegrin education
- Introduction of open and flexible curricula
- Introduction of elective subjects in both primary and secondary schools
- Production of textbooks free of ideological, religious and other biases
- Promotion of a child-centred approach to teaching (OSI, 2007).

Policies and legislation on social inclusion in education should be seen within the overall framework of ongoing education reforms in Montenegro.

Overall policy framework for social inclusion and education

The Constitution of Montenegro guarantees the right to education for all children in equal conditions. Elementary education is compulsory and is provided free of charge. The Constitution states that parents are bound to take care of children, to raise them and send them to school; it also indicates that children should enjoy rights and freedoms suitable to their age and maturity and that children are guaranteed special protection from psychological, physical, economic and any other exploitation or abuse.

In the last twenty years, Montenegro has been surrounded by conflict and has faced many challenges but has managed to preserve good inter-religious, interethnic and intercultural relations. The diverse composition of the population, where there is no clear majority group, is, in the view of a number of political analysts, “one of the determinants of the current stability” (Hockenos and Winterhagen, 2007), which “allowed for post-independent policies to target mainly the pragmatic aspects of economic development and European integration rather than the appeasement of the various ethnic group ambitions” (Serafimescu, 2008).

With regard to minorities in Montenegro, the Constitution of Montenegro states that Montenegro is an independent and sovereign state based on the rule of law. It explicitly bans assimilation practices and guarantees the rights and liberties of minorities. Unlike other young independent states, the official language in Montenegro is Montenegrin, while Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian and Croatian may also be used officially. National legislation in the field of education reflects the constitutional guarantees of education for minorities, both at the level of general objectives and principles of education and at the level of provision for individuals. Stemming from the constitutional rights and the national legislation, the education of students from minority backgrounds in their mother tongue is guaranteed.

A Strategy for Improving the Position of the RAE Population in Montenegro 2008-2012 and a Strategy for the Integration of People with Disabilities in Montenegro were adopted in 2007. They outline measures aimed at the inclusion of these two vulnerable groups in society and recognise the importance of education as an essential step in achieving aims.

The main objective of the RAE strategy in the field of education is the creation of essential conditions that guarantee the right to education, i.e., attendance at school. A set of measures and activities have been proposed with the following aims: increase the number of children in pre-school education and in regular elementary school; ensure the development of additional support plans and programmes of work; provide free textbooks and school supplies; maintain regular monitoring and evaluation of education; reduce the number of children leaving education during or at the end of primary school; organise special activities among Roma parents to increase awareness of the importance of education, etc.

The aim of the strategy for people with disabilities (which focuses on the education of all categories of children with special needs and adult persons with disabilities) is to ensure the development of the potential, sense of dignity and personal worth of the targeted individuals.

The government currently allocates 0.02% of the national budget to funding the protection of minority rights in education, housing and employment through different projects or activities aimed at overcoming obstacles in

the everyday lives of minorities. About 30% of the total is allocated to education, mostly to projects carried out by NGOs³⁷.

The Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs generally follows the reform decisions, recommendations and standards of European legislation in this area. However, it is generally agreed that the law needs to further apply the principle that education is not only the process of acquiring academic knowledge and achievement, but the process of acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for life.

The Rulebook of Criteria for Determining Type and Degree of Deficiencies, Problems and Disorders in Children and Youth with Special Needs and Their Involvement in Educational Programmes was produced as a requirement of the Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs (Article 4). The regulation outlined in the Rulebook is based around the medical model of special needs and recognises only the concepts of 'defects' and 'damage'. Clearly, to follow the European trend, there is a need to adjust the current model and adopt the cultural-social model which reflects the concepts of preserved potentials, capacities and capabilities of the child through the integrative relationship between personal and environmental factors.³⁸

The Law on the Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons With Disability includes measures and activities which promote appropriate work-related training for persons with disabilities. It establishes quotas for employment of persons with a disability and provides for penalties if stipulations of this law are disregarded.

The government of Montenegro adopted the Strategy for Inclusive Education in Montenegro in 2008. The general objective is to ensure and promote a quality and accessible education for all children and youth with special educational needs in accordance with their interests, capabilities and needs. The aims are as follows: (1) harmonization of normative acts with national and international documents; (2) systematic support for the professional development of staff; (3) provision of horizontal and vertical connections between educational institutions combining regular and special curricula; (4) organization of a network of support; (5) quality assurance and monitoring of the education system; and (6) promotion of positive attitudes.

The strategy for inclusive education introduces the term 'children with special education needs' encompassing children with disabilities (with physical, mental and sensory, or combined impairments) and children with development difficulties (with behavioral disorders, severe chronic diseases, long-term illnesses, learning and other difficulties caused by emotional, social, linguistic and cultural deprivation).

³⁷ Roma Circle NGO Coalition (2009). Report on the implementation of protection policies in Montenegro at the state and local levels in 2008, Podgorica.

³⁸ The social model of disability proposes that systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (on purpose or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining who is disabled and who is not in a particular society. It recognises that while some people have physical, sensory, intellectual or psychological variations which may sometimes cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these do not have to lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences. The model does not deny that some individual differences lead to individual limitations or impairments, but rather that these are not the cause of individuals being excluded.

Policy implementation

Education in Montenegro is currently provided in Montenegrin (the official language) and in Albanian, with most textbooks available in both languages. The curriculum for Albanian students is identical to the mainstream curriculum, except for the addition of an Albanian language and literature class. In schools, teachers, parents and the school are jointly responsible for the design of 20% of the curriculum in cooperation with the local community. This part of the curriculum usually covers topics such as mother tongue and literature, history, art and culture of minorities and other content that promotes mutual tolerance and cohabitation. Thus, the elective subject covering the history of religion is in the process of development; civic education has been introduced as a new, compulsory subject for the 6th and 7th grade of elementary school and as an elective subject for the 1st to 4th gymnasium grades. Civic education has been introduced to improve knowledge and understanding of diversity and the commitment to the development of future active citizens.

Education is available in Albanian at all levels, from pre-school to tertiary. The numbers of students in pre-school and elementary education in the Albanian language are as follows:^{39,40}

Number of students	2008/2009 school year
Pre-school education	193
Elementary school education	3,429

The numbers for secondary schools are as follows:

Number of students	2008/2009 school year
Secondary vocational education	426
Secondary general education	797

At the tertiary level, education in the Albanian language is organised within teacher education in the Albanian language study programme at the University of Montenegro.

Teacher education in the Albanian language	2006/2007			2007/2008			2008/2009		
	Bach	Spec	Master	Bach	Spec	Master	Bach	Spec	Master
Students	74	/	/	80	/	/	68	/	/

Bach = bachelor's degree; Spec = specialist studies; Master = master's degree.

³⁹ Ministry of Education and Science database.

⁴⁰ Annex 2 provides an overview of the education system in Montenegro, including the total number of students for the academic year for 2009/2010 (thereby enabling a comparison of data).

The RAE people in Montenegro are a diverse group: Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. In addition, there is a large Albanian speaking group that came from Kosovo⁴¹ in 1999 during the conflicts and civil unrest in Kosovo. Important advances relevant to the education of RAE pupils in recent years include improvements in access to textbooks and school supplies through activities of the government, civil society and international donors. The National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion was updated in 2007, while the Montenegro Statistics Institute (MONSTAT) and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights initiated the collection of data on the Roma population in 2008. Despite this, it is believed that many issues remain to be addressed in order to bring a lasting reduction in the gap in education outcomes between Roma and non-Roma in Montenegro (Roma Circle, 2008).

One good practice example is that of a project entitled Dispersion of Roma Students in Urban Schools operated by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Montenegro Red Cross. Through this project, the Ministry of Education and Science takes a more strategic approach, bringing Roma children out of settlements and putting them with other students in different urban primary schools. The project partners have organised training for teachers and the provision of free books and textbooks, free transportation and free meals for Roma students in support of the objectives of the project.

In recent reforms, the efficiency of the orientation process has been improved with the Commission for the Orientation of Students with Special Needs deciding what is in the best interests of children. This means that old practices where Roma students were mostly categorised and sent to special classes or special schools have now been stopped. Instead, the process is now child-oriented and Roma students are fully integrated in mainstream education.

However, the enrolment rate in education remains lower amongst RAE students. Access to pre-school is limited by a shortage of places in the available facilities. This shortfall disproportionately affects RAE children, as priority is given to families in which both parents work, which is rare among the Roma. The Ministry of Education and Science should take steps to revise this policy and ensure that Roma children, who could benefit greatly from the preparatory aspect of pre-school, are also included. The costs associated with attending school are also beyond what many Roma families can afford. There is no information suggesting that Roma children are placed in segregated classes in mainstream schools, although there are Roma-majority schools in areas where the population has a high proportion of Roma. Limited research has been conducted into whether Roma are over-represented in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities, although this issue is addressed in the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma (OSI, 2007).

Parents have also highlighted similar issues regarding their children's education.

⁴¹ As defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

The parents of children from the RAE population mention the lack of free textbooks and other school supplies (bags, notebooks, pencils, etc) as obstacles to education. Parents believe that it is necessary to ensure that clothes and shoes are adequate for children to be able to go to school. In the parents' view, only the provision of all these items (ensuring adequate material and financial conditions) by the social welfare centre can provide adequate social security for RAE families and ensure equitable access for RAE children to schools. These respondents have also highlighted problems in transportation, provision of which would enable children to regularly attend classes and ensure their safety to and from school.

The enrolment procedure for primary education is dependent on the provision of identification documents for the parents and the children to be enrolled. "No research data are available on the number of Roma children excluded from primary schools due to the lack of personal documentation and no evidence suggests that schools reject Roma pupils due to a lack of documentation. The issue of the lack of documentation may be more visible among refugee and internally displaced Roma people, however, who must follow somewhat different procedures in order to acquire the certificates requested for the enrolment of their children in the formal school system. The Decade Action Plan recognises the need for a specific enrolment policy for Roma, given the particular environment in which they live" (OSI, 2007). A number of activities are listed under this goal (OSI, 2007), including the following:

- Standardisation or the development of instruments to appropriately assess school-age children, with special attention paid to the particular needs of Roma
- Enrolment of all Roma children except those with serious developmental problems in the first grade of primary school
- Double or postponed school entrance exams (one in April and another in August) for Roma children, along with an intensive summer programme to prepare children who have failed the April tests for school.

"Furthermore, the Decade Action Plan calls for the principle of affirmative action to be applied when it comes to enrolment in secondary and higher education. It endorses affirmative action only when it comes to secondary and higher education, due to the extremely low number of Roma students at this level of education." (OSI, 2007)

"Language barriers against the inclusion of RAE children in schools remain. However, due to a diverse RAE population in Montenegro, differences depend on their background. "Of all Roma children enrolled in primary schools, 49% are refugees and displaced persons. It has been recognised that action is required even at the pre-school level to overcome the language barriers faced by these children and to facilitate their successful integration into primary school. All the families speak Albanian, but most also speak Romanes (78.9%). One noteworthy and positive observation is that while families continue to use Romanes as their main language of communication, they also introduce the language of the community (Montenegrin or Serbian) and in 39% of the families use both languages equally; those families are actively preparing their children to enter the school system and to overcome language barriers more easily, so that they learn well the language in which they will engage in the educational process." (OSI, 2007)

Some children with disabilities and other marginalised children—the so-called ‘invisible’ children—are actually not included in education at all (Milić, 2009). According to estimates of the Association of Parents of Children with Special Needs, children with extremely severe and combined disabilities do not exceed 1% of the total school population.

However, a MONSTAT database of the RAE population in Montenegro of May 2009, shows the following data on RAE children included in pre-primary education in October 2008:

Included in kindergarten	15.02%
Not included in kindergarten	64.79%
No data	20.18%

However, the above-mentioned report does not provide similar data for primary and secondary schools.⁴²

To ensure that children living in more distant rural areas attend school (they may be kept out of school by parents to work in the home or on the farm), the Ministry of Education and Science provides possibilities for their schooling in district/satellite schools. Secondary schools are located in local urban centres. So, in general, pupils may complete primary school education, but they, or their families, may choose not to enrol in secondary school.

The Law on Primary Education permits children the right to be educated at home. Home schooling can be organised by parents on the basis of the current public curriculum; students must acquire knowledge in line with the educational standards in the regular school programme. The school is obliged to check the knowledge of students educated at home at the end of the school year. There are however no official data on the number of children being educated through this system.

An interesting corollary to this right is the right to schooling in hospital stipulated in the Law on Primary Education but, there are no cases of use of this right (feedback from the Children’s Hospital of Podgorica).

Local authorities in Montenegro have limited responsibilities for education, due to a predominantly centrally organised system. On the basis of the Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs, 18 of 21 municipalities have formed committees for the orientation of children with special needs in educational institutions, etc. Their cost is met from the budget of the municipal authorities. The efficiency of the orientation has been improved by a range of measures.

A good practice example involves the Nikšić municipality, which prepared several strategic documents aimed at creating a suitable environment for its vulnerable populations and then engaged the entire community in the implementation of the measures and activities envisaged by these plans. In Bijelo Polje, a public daycare centre for children with disabilities has been established. In Herceg Novi, a project has been implemented in which SEN students are accompanied in school by a teaching assistant.

⁴² The database, available at <http://www.monstat.org/Publikacije.htm>, does provide data on the RAE population aged 15 years and older without primary or secondary education.

For the purpose of obtaining a clearer picture of the field of inclusive education we cross-checked the desk research and fieldwork findings. We found that Montenegro has invested significant effort into strategies for increasing inclusion in mainstream education. The concept of inclusion adopted focuses the most developed strategies on particularly vulnerable groups, especially the RAE population and SEN children.

The adopted strategies show initial results reflected in an increasing number of children with SEN in schools, an acceptance of diversity in the student population, opportunities for parents to participate actively and support their children, teachers being trained for work in inclusion (seminars within the Professional Development of Teachers in School project) and use of the Index for Inclusion to evaluate the inclusiveness of schools⁴³). Strong cooperation has developed between educational institutions and NGOs, resulting in a number of projects dealing with the education of teachers, equipping schools and reducing prejudice towards children with disabilities. Roma inclusion has been enhanced through a number of projects, covering areas such as interactive teaching, anti-bias strategies in education, etc, supported by scholarships for Roma students. Steps have also been taken to reduce the number of school drop-outs, enhance school achievement and ensure greater access to secondary schools and faculties.

With the improvements already made in the system in relation to specific disadvantaged groups and with the increased number of diversified classes, a broader concept of inclusion as a general practice, as used in this study, may be discussed in Montenegro.

Respondents from the group of system-level decision makers see progress and achievement in the following:

1. Awareness of the importance of inclusive education amongst the professional and non-professional public has been significantly raised.
2. Acceptance of the fact that children with disabilities and RAE children must be educated in conditions that suit their needs and their capabilities has significantly improved, so the coverage of SEN students in mainstream education is higher every day.
3. The issue of SEN students has been moved more towards the integrative model.
4. Families and parents develop confidence in the system and show willingness to engage children in the educational process.
5. The role and importance of teachers in the education process is recognised by legislative and strategy documents.

In the authors' view, in the process of creating an inclusive education system that has been implemented in Montenegro, priority has been given to children with disabilities. The rationale behind giving prioritizing the inclusion of students with disabilities can be found in the fact that the education system was segregating students with special needs into separate special schools for decades prior to the change in state policy.

The special school experience from the previous period, referred to as the 'segregation period', resulted in students not being prepared for working life after leaving school. A large number of students had insufficient

⁴³ For example, in the Dr Dragiša Ivanović school in Podgorica, where teacher training courses focusing on relevant inclusive education topics were organized, an access ramp for students using wheelchairs was built, equipment and didactic materials for working with SEN students were bought, etc.

skills for independent living and therefore often become beneficiaries of social welfare or very passive participants in society (Ministry of Education and Science/OECD, 2004).

The inclusion policies and the overall reform of the education system are geared towards inclusion of special needs students into mainstream education so as to enable their full participation in society. Although it is appreciated that reaching the set objectives will take time, the main aim is to develop an integrative system based on interaction between personal factors (disabilities) and environmental factors (barriers, isolation, etc) for students with special needs.

4.2 Teacher competences for inclusive education

Bearing in mind the current emphasis placed on the inclusion of children with disabilities, during the focus group discussions, teachers primarily discussed the particular competences needed to work with students with disabilities. On discussing competences for inclusive education, teachers emphasised the ability to develop individual education plans for students with special needs as an important competence. Also deemed important was understanding development issues and student capabilities as a basis for developing individual education plans. However, teachers did not actually feel confident in designing and implementing individual educational plans.

During the discussion of competences relevant to inclusion, the research team noticed that teachers, when discussing individual approaches to learning, mostly showed a good understanding of their role and of the basic competences needed to improve learning outcomes for students. They also recognised the need to innovate in teaching methods to help all children learn. Teachers participating in the study also highlighted as relevant interpersonal skills such as good communication, recognition and understanding of the problems which students face at different ages, as well as awareness of their own stereotyping and prejudices.

Teachers mentioned, to a much lesser extent, competences which were required to support cognitive, social, emotional and moral development of students and also those needed to relate with students and their families at an interpersonal level. Teachers very rarely mentioned competences which proactively addressed inequities in teaching materials or policies implemented at the school or even state level. We thought that this selection of competences related directly to the most and least used competences in their classrooms.

In relation to teacher competences for understanding and respecting diversity, the research team observed that teachers mostly mentioned that they had the skills necessary to recognise and respect cultural and individual differences and were able to encourage intercultural respect and understanding among students. However, the teachers did not speak about understanding the different values that students and their families may hold. Furthermore, self-reflection in terms of recognizing how their assumptions influence their teaching and relationships with different pupils, as well as recognizing that knowledge is reciprocal, was not mentioned during the discussions. Therefore, the research team concludes that further efforts are needed in terms of understanding the relevance of attitudes and prejudices and also developing inclusive attitudes to provide for real respect towards every single student.

In our view, the teachers showed relatively poor knowledge of the basic principles of social inclusion: that the treatment of children with respect affirms their worth and dignity. Teachers did not reveal a familiarity with children's rights and anti-discrimination conventions. In our view, a lack of focus on certain competences, such as maintaining high expectations regardless of student backgrounds, believing in the educability of every child and understanding the social and cultural dimensions of education, indicates a low level of in-depth understanding of social inclusion.

Based on the focus group discussions, it seems evident that teachers have been strongly influenced by the previous emphasis on the integration of students with disabilities and the lower priority given to the inclusion of other students with additional support needs.

The findings from the e-survey tend to corroborate this conclusion and, although it should be noted that the findings from the e-survey data cannot be generalised, they are true for at least the participants at this time. The e-survey findings indicate that the professional development process for teachers may have had an impact on their attitudes, as follows: 78.72% strongly agree that when children with special needs attend regular classes, not only do they receive benefits, but most of the other students learn about diversity and tolerance; 80.85% strongly agree that including children with development disabilities in regular classes is the right way to educate them and the best way to integrate them into the community; 76.09% believe that even children with severe developmental disabilities can learn; 37.78% strongly disagree and 62.22% disagree with the statement that academic achievement is more important than social inclusion; finally, 61.70% strongly agree that teachers should adapt their instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

In creating an inclusive education system, the teachers stressed the importance of developing professional support mechanisms for teachers. This, they believed, should come from school services through, for example, specialists in inclusive and intercultural pedagogy, as well as through further professional development of their own competences.

4.3 Barriers to inclusion

Based on existing policy papers and the researchers' practical experiences, some perceived problems in developing inclusive education are uncoordinated legislation at all levels of services (especially in the area of social, health and child protection) and insufficient spatial capacity in the institutions (the problem of overcrowding, especially in city schools, is very evident).

When it comes to applying the concept of inclusive education, the secondary school level is neglected. There is a lack of professionals (particularly specialists in special needs education⁴⁴) as members of school staff for supporting teachers and there is also a lack of pupil support programmes and of assistants and volunteer helper programmes.

Similarly, Education Policies for Students at Risk and Those With Disabilities (OECD, 2007b) identified insufficiently trained staff, insufficiently equipped schools, architectural barriers and the prejudices of some parents and children as barriers to the implementation of the recent legislation aimed at inclusion in Montenegro. The report further highlights that resources targeted at the education of students with special needs are minimal. Additional resources are needed to ensure the quality of education for children with special needs; in particular, investments are needed for additional training of teaching staff, improving the existing infrastructure and ensuring the availability of specialist teaching materials.

⁴⁴ Often the term defectologist is used when referring to support staff needed in special needs education in schools. While the majority of Western European countries adopted the social model of disability and thus developed faculty programmes in special needs education, the medical model and defectology programmes remained central in the countries of Former Yugoslavia. The concept of defectology was developed from the medical model of disability; illness or disability is the result of a physical condition, is intrinsic to the individual (part of that individual's own body), may reduce the individual's quality of life and causes clear disadvantages to the individual. A trend away from defectology towards special needs education can be observed in universities in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.

Categories of students with special education needs are still not clearly defined. The inclusive process begun without preconditions. A system to precede it had not been developed (early diagnosis, rehabilitation, support services to families and children, etc).⁴⁵

If a mainstream institution includes SEN students, then the number of children per group or class should be decreased by 10%, according to the Rulebook on the Norms and Standards for Obtaining Public Funds for Institutions Offering Publicly Valid Educational Programmes. While this may be so in law, parents from the focus groups thought that school managers interpret these instructions inflexibly. The large classes and the lack of additional support increase the pressure on teachers in relation to their work in the classroom. The legal framework has to define more clearly the role of teachers in the process of inclusion.

As mentioned earlier, secondary education remains neglected in terms of staff preparedness for inclusion compared to pre-school and primary education. This is a relevant barrier to inclusion since plainly it may limit access to secondary education and therefore to post-secondary education.

It is important to note that in primary schools, assessment of the attainments of SEN students is based on individual levels of achievement against individual education plan targets, rather than on the knowledge of particular subjects as taught to whole classes. Assessment for an individual SEN student could include an assessments such as whether the use of the mother tongue helped the student to develop speaking competences further. In regular secondary schools such flexible approaches are not adopted. Students with special needs are not exempted from the final exam in primary school and there are no possibilities for direct transition to secondary schools. The position of would-be university students with special needs is similar to that of would-be secondary school students. The enrolment criteria do not take into account psycho-physical competences and the status of students with special needs (OECD, 2007a).

Secondary education of SEN students is not sufficiently oriented towards secondary vocational education. Grammar schools offer much academic knowledge. Secondary vocational schools can offer much more adequate preparation in terms of practical knowledge for independent living. In secondary vocational school education could be based more on capabilities and realistic assessments of the needs of the labour market, making children active, not passive citizens.⁴⁶

As mirrored in the quote above, teacher understanding of how far the students can go may reflect the underlying reasoning behind the policy focus on pre-school and primary education. While pre-school and primary education is essential to the inclusion of individuals in society, it is essential to place similar importance on the progression possibilities for all students through the education system.

⁴⁵ Findings from field research and focus group discussions with elementary school teachers.

⁴⁶ Focus group discussions with secondary school teachers.

These are some other relevant field research findings:

Schools must have an official statement from the Commission for the Orientation of Children with Special Needs. This official document not only commits the school, but also gives the school detailed instructions on how to work with and adjust the school to the SEN student.⁴⁷

According to in-service teacher trainers involved in the initial education of teachers, what is missing is practical knowledge from didactics, particularly methodology and developmental and pedagogical psychology. They thought that teachers often overestimate or underestimate student potential. Also, from their point of view, although teachers do adapt the programme to ensure student achievements, only rarely is this self-initiated. They estimate that the secondary school level is completely neglected in terms of promoting inclusive education, as well as in terms of training. However, these teachers do not have any information, nor are they at all familiar with the legal framework and strategies in the area of inclusive education.

With regard to the Roma, NGOs and donor respondents pointed out that the most significant weaknesses in the current system of education relate to the absence of an adequate database for the Roma population, followed by limited access of Roma to pre-school education. There are also insufficient measures to address language barriers and there is a dearth of qualified Roma teaching staff.

Parents of children from the RAE population are very aware that the lack of language knowledge is a big problem. Children only use the Montenegrin language in school. The rest of the time they communicate in their mother tongue (Albanian or Romani).⁴⁸

At the same time, teachers in the focus groups stressed that they lack competences and support mechanisms to overcome language barriers in working with RAE students.

In teacher focus groups, teachers agreed that in the process of developing inclusive education, not enough attention has been given to teachers who work directly with SEN students. Teachers are not trained or resourced to meet standards of achievement for students with disabilities (primarily children with intellectual disabilities). They do not have guidelines or enough knowledge to work with specific disabilities and support services are not in place to help them work more effectively with students with disabilities.

From our point of view, the integration of students with disabilities into the regular system benefits from the promotion of inclusive education principles. It seems that further attention should be given to developing guidelines for teachers on working with students with additional education support needs. However, the risk in promoting inclusive education is the belief that inclusive education is merely a cover for the integration of children with special needs, with less time and attention being paid to students with behavioural problems and with learning and other difficulties caused by emotional, social, economic, linguistic and cultural deprivation.

⁴⁷ Focus group discussions with parents from the Savo Pejanović elementary school.

⁴⁸ Focus group discussions with RAE parents in Kamp Konik.

Teachers rarely or never conduct research to advance the understanding of education's contribution to social inclusion. This is due partly to a lack of self-confidence to initiate such classroom research and partly to the fact that the competences to carry out such activities are not perceived by them, their teacher educator or employers as necessary for their role of teacher.

4.4 Policies for teacher preparation and development

All employed teachers, apart from those in private gymnasiums, are civil servants. Educational staff is regulated by law. Professional work in schools is done by expert associates: psychologists, pedagogues and librarian (and in larger schools, speech therapists). Depending on the needs of the school and the programme being implemented, professional work can also be done by speech therapists, special needs education experts, social and healthcare workers, etc. Teachers are recruited on the basis of public tender and the decision to employ a particular candidate is made by the school principal. The average salary of pre-school, primary school and secondary school teachers per month is 362 EUR, 440 EUR and 460 EUR, respectively. According to MONSTAT, the average salary for May 2009 in the educational sector was 432 EUR, while an average net salary in May 2009 in Montenegro was 468 EUR.

In Montenegro there are two higher education institutes in the form of one public and one private university. The state university is autonomous by law and mostly funded from the state budget. After Montenegro joined the Bologna Process in 2003, higher education legislation was changed in accordance with the Bologna recommendations. Most of the faculties are currently in the process of creating new programmes or have already done so. Newly established undergraduate studies follow the 3+1+1 pattern (3, 1 and 1 years of undergraduate, specialist and master's studies, respectively), but at present this is more a formal adaptation of the previous four-year courses. Clearer guidelines are expected once a national qualifications framework is adopted.

A changing value system in Montenegro has led to the teaching profession becoming less important and attractive in society. Teachers no longer enjoy the respect and authority they once had. Teachers who find themselves working with students make efforts and are personally strong out of pure enthusiasm. But many do their jobs almost mechanically. Those teachers feel that promoting inclusion is an additional obligation and do not do it voluntarily, especially because they are not paid additionally for their efforts (researchers' observations from their own practice).

The status of teachers must be improved. Salaries should be higher, particularly to enable teachers to adequately resolve housing issues. This is necessary to recognise and respect committed and active teachers and provide them with support in various ways. The Bureau for Education Services undertakes some of the activities to consider and support such teachers by involving them in projects and activities and seeking to support certain benefits, but this obviously is not enough.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Director of the Bureau for Education Services.

In-service teacher training process and programmes

The Bureau for Education Services, an institution dealing with the development of the educational system, has a number of departments with responsibility for, among other matters, the monitoring of inclusive education and its statistical review: the Department for Research and Work with Professional staff, the Department for Quality Control in Education, the Centre for Continuous Professional Development and the Centre for Programming and Development.

The Centre for Continuous Professional Development publishes the catalogue of programmes for the professional improvement of teachers. In the catalogue of accredited programmes for 2009, twelve programmes on inclusive education with the following themes were offered: fundamentals of integrated education in practice; establishing a partner-like relationship with families; observing and evaluating; creating an individual educational plan; adjusting the classroom to students with special needs, etc. The main aim of this catalogue is to offer a choice of topics to school staff in order to contribute to schools improving their inclusiveness based on recommendations that arise from a school's self-evaluation.

Teacher promotion

The Rulebook on the Types of Degrees, Conditions, Manner and Procedure For Nominating and Awarding the Title of Teacher has located the school staff promotion scheme within a system of annual professional development for teachers, within which a teacher sets a task for him/herself, with all the activities contributing to its completion done in school. Professional work by teachers, referring to educational work in an institution, is evaluated and graded, according to the Bureau for Education Services (School-Based Professional Development: Guidelines for Schools), as follows:

- One point: activism in working with students in a school
- Two points: engagement in spreading knowledge
- Three points: mentorship, participation in projects etc.
- Four points: international activities
- Five points: authorship of a manual or workbook approved in accordance with the rules and co-authorship of books
- Eight points: published research work that contributes to the development and affirmation of the educational process in Montenegro
- Ten points: authorship of a book, participation as a researcher in a scientific research project in Montenegro and its international promotion.

The request for promotion of teachers may be submitted by the teacher him/herself, professional bodies in the school, professional associations or the principal of school. The request has to be addressed to the Awards Commission attached to the Ministry of Education and Science.

Teacher standards

The Bureau for Education Services (Our School: Standards for Teacher Improvement) unifies the criteria which must be met to qualify for professional promotion within the teaching profession. Continuous improvement is an obligatory part of every teacher's job and is embedded in the professional development system. Standards for teachers' vocations include the following levels:

- Teacher with experience (T)
- Teacher mentor (M)
- Teacher consultant (C)
- Teacher higher consultant (HC)
- Teacher researcher (R)

In the future these will have direct influence on the teachers' status (in terms of salaries and other benefits)

Hence, the position of teachers through the legal framework, national policy and strategy, is quite clear at the policy level. Yet in the curricular and social dimensions of education, where moves towards including more 'knowledge and skills for life' within the curriculum would be practically useful for children with additional support needs, these needs and desirable moves are not recognised. This system of career progression does not specifically encourage development of inclusive education competences by teachers. Rather, this is considered as one of an equally-important set of skills and competences needed for a reformed education system teacher.

Teachers are aware of the legislation, but it is questionable whether they are educated adequately to fulfil the requirements to the levels stipulated by law, as they do not feel competent enough. Secondary school teachers are not well trained or informed about their role in this process. Support services are slowly being constituted. The needs for mobile teams⁵⁰ is greater than their availability, thus not all students receive help.⁵¹

However, in the authors' opinion, since being an inclusive teacher implies providing quality education to all students, we believe that inclusive education competences should be put on the career promotion agenda more explicitly.

⁵⁰ To assist with SEN, mobile services provide additional expertise, support and other necessary assistance to SEN students in the regular system. In Montenegro, the four mobile teams (Podgorica, Niksic, Montenegro and North Coast) are composed of defectologists from special schools or from special classes in regular schools and psychologists, pedagogues and speech therapists.

⁵¹ Marko Jokić, Deputy Minister of Education and Science.

5. MAPPING TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INCLUSION

5.1 Pre-service training

In order to become a teacher one needs to attend a minimum of three years of basic or what is called applied teacher studies. However, in practice the holders of these degrees are not sought after for employment, so they usually have to take an additional year of specialist studies. They are awarded a degree that corresponds to the pre-Bologna four-year degree (as already mentioned, this system will be clarified after the adoption of a national qualifications framework). When graduates are first employed, they have to go through an internship stage, of a minimum of six months and a maximum of one year, to be fully recognised as a professional. On completing their internship, teachers must also pass the state professional examination for teachers.

Teacher respondents in our research themselves pointed out a real difference between the pre-service education of social science and natural science teachers. The social science teachers study psychology, pedagogy, etc, whereas the natural science teachers choose between two orientations: theory and research. Those who choose to follow the theoretical natural science stream receive little didactic instruction. Students who choose research have neither additional pedagogical nor didactic subjects. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude, albeit from the perspectives of the relatively small number of research participants included in this study, that pre-service education does not meet the needs of teachers. The advantage of their work, as they see it, is the freedom in terms of choice of methodology and materials, especially in relation to optional subjects.

The teacher education programme consists of academic, pedagogic and didactic subjects. Academic subjects prevail, making up 90% of all courses in most of the faculties. Faculties at which most of the future teachers study are the Faculty of Philosophy⁵² in Nikšić, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in Podgorica and the Art and Music Academy of Cetinje. Individuals with a higher education degree can work in schools, provided they pass the state exam for teachers and their qualifications correspond to the teaching needs of a school. The Faculty of Philosophy in Nikšić has a department for pre-school education.

In terms of subjects taught in the programmes, an inclusive education subject is taught during the third year in the department for the teacher training. There is also a methods of inclusive education subject. In Montenegro there is no Faculty of Special Education Needs (or for the education of professionals for rehabilitation and education).⁵³ This fact creates obstacles in terms of providing early rehabilitation for some children with SEN and for additional professional support of various kinds throughout education, e.g., direct support for students, support for mainstream teachers, advice for parents, etc.

During the field research⁵⁴ we found that school managers recognised that pre-service teacher education is lacking in practical knowledge in didactics, particularly methods, and in developmental and pedagogical psychology. They also thought that teachers consider their role as wider than just delivering the curriculum and ensuring learning in their students. However, the managers thought that this depended significantly on the

⁵² With 16 different departments (teachers, pedagogy, psychology, etc).

⁵³ So far, professional support staff has primarily been defectologists trained in Belgrade or Zagreb Faculties of Defectology. As explained earlier, Zagreb, Belgrade and Ljubljana are in the process of reforming their Faculties of Defectology to reflect the paradigm shift from the medical model of disability towards the social model of disability. The shift is evident in the terminology used, the content and approach adopted in the curricula, and the professional titles awarded upon completion of the programme.

⁵⁴ Based on an analysis and interpretation of the opinions of school managers expressed in structured interviews.

ethos of the school, the exchange of experiences, use of more modern teaching methods, etc, and that it was not the result of pre-service education. So, according to their views, more practice, seminars and experience exchanges are needed.

Further analysis of teacher opinions shows that pre-service teacher education generally provides a theoretical framework for the profession while the practical, experiential aspect starts with employment. The basic studies do not have modules through which teachers could be educated in the knowledge and skills necessary for work with SEN children. According to our respondents, teachers in secondary vocational education are able to recognise the special needs of students, but not to provide the best approach to work with them. This is not an adequate state of preparedness for the needs of a modern education system and indicates that additional training is needed.

Teachers are still not given the best deal in the inclusive education process and therefore a series of resistances appear, primarily because they are not adequately trained and supported. The best-educated are first grade teachers. Subject teachers do not have similar possibilities: they studied content, not method. Preparation and adjustment of individual education plans are troublesome because teachers expect uniform principles, a universal model which would apply to all children.⁵⁵

Results from the online survey provide additional insights. A total of 46 teachers responded to the online survey: 16 primary class teachers, 21 primary subject teachers and 9 secondary teachers; most respondents were under 50 (19 respondents aged 26-35 years and 25 respondents aged 36-50 years).

Most (34) of the respondents had studied at an institution/department specifically for teacher education; 6 teachers had undertaken a compulsory set of courses to become a teacher in addition to their other courses and 4 respondents had, in addition to their other courses, undertaken courses of their choice from a list of options to become a teacher. The remaining respondents did not answer the question.

According to the respondents, during teacher pre-service education the following topics were mostly covered: intercultural education, child-centred learning, interactive learning and communication as partners (including with parents and communities). Topics that were covered less were the role of education in societal reproduction and/or improvement, social inclusion and collaborative learning.

Discussions in class with individuals or in small groups with teacher/mentor were often possible. Many prepared for teaching with the help of participation in group projects and/or collaborative group work. However, there were ten people who, during teacher education, had never taken on opportunities to develop the skills necessary for work.

The previously mentioned possibilities for practical training had a particular impact on opportunities to challenge assumptions and preconceptions. At the same time, teachers highlighted inadequate training at faculties, in particular, regarding the application of an interactive educational process; the fact that programmes did not have enough relevant content and lacked relevant practice are obstacles to the acquisition of better competences for inclusion.

⁵⁵ Zorica Minić, an active learning trainer.

In the respondents' opinions inclusive education needed to put more emphasis on individual work and ensuring access to what is being taught for each student, not treating them only as part of the group. They thought it important to encourage an interest in students as people with all their problems and dilemmas and not just show an interest in their education. It is necessary to create an understanding of their own behaviour by teachers and of its influence on the behaviour of children. Teachers should understand the range of needs of their students and try to adapt their teaching materials accordingly. Continuous supervisory support to teachers is also needed.

What is also needed in education is a choice of effective learning strategies, guidance manuals and the involvement of external experts to support teachers in being effective. On the basis of their professional experience, teachers recommended that the selection of future teachers should start even in the pre-service process.

Teacher educators themselves pointed out that the concept of education at the Faculty of Teacher Education should be changed in the direction of applying new educational models and innovations in teaching and should include several subjects dealing with methods of work with SEN students and more practical work during the course of studies to ensure high quality knowledgeable staff who can deal with the challenges of modern education concepts.

Although the number of teacher educators⁵⁶ who responded to the e-survey was relatively small (ten, eight of whom were women) authors found that they provided interesting views on teacher education from their perspective.

Asked how they acquired competences relevant for inclusion during the pre service education they provided the following answers:

- During the study programmes future teachers acquired the competence to adapt curricula to particular pupils in a different scale. Some of them are completely or on a high level acquired for this, but some of them not at a level which provide professional self-confidence.
- Then, teachers are prepared to recognise and respect cultural and individual differences also in a different level. Some of them thought that they are completely acquired but also some of them thought that they are not at all acquired for this.
- Teacher thought that Faculties prepare them to be able to recognise pupils' special needs and provide for them or seek help in a following way: to a low level (1); To a medium level (1); To a high level (2); To a very high level (2); Completely (3).
- After basic studies teachers are able to recognise gifted pupils' needs and provide appropriately in a following way: Not at all (1); to a medium level (2); To a high level (1); To a very high level (3); Completely (3); Not at all (1)

Authors conclude that it is necessary to make an effort for standardization and equalization of knowledge, skills and competencies.

⁵⁶ The e-survey included teacher educators and professors from faculties. In-service teacher trainers were interviewed.

It is worth noting that seven of the ten teacher educators believed that the student teachers had received training in competences to encourage intercultural respect and understanding amongst pupils to a very high degree or completely. Nine believed that the students had received competences to develop opinions and belief in the educability of every child to a high or very high degree or completely.

The eight student teachers interviewed report that they are given the following opportunities during the teacher education programmes they are currently undertaking:

- Individual or small group discussions with teacher/mentor (often 5, sometimes 3)
- Participation in group projects (often 5, sometimes 3)
- Collaborative group work (regularly 5, irregularly 3)
- Opportunities to challenge assumptions and preconceptions (often 2, sometimes 6).

However, student teachers thought that less attention was given to linguistic diversity and intercultural education (2 respondents).

Student teacher views related to students with SEN shows the lack of real-life contact with students with different disabilities. Accordingly, they do not develop affirmative and socially inclusive personal attitudes or inclusive principles towards these students. For example, when students gave an opinion about children with intellectual difficulties, 4 students thought that some kind of special education was the best option for such children. The students gave a more positive view of Roma, with 6 students of the opinion that Roma children should be fully included in regular classes.

The students hold diverse opinions about the schooling of children with visual impairments, speech impairments and hearing impairments. Thus, the children with visual impairments should be included in regular schools but in a special education department of the school (2 respondents), mainly in special schools (3 students) or completely in special schools (2 students). They think similarly about children with severe intellectual difficulties and children with hearing and speech impairment—that they should be included in regular schools in a special education department (2 respondents), mainly in special schools (2 respondents) or completely in special schools (3 students).

Their opinion about the schooling of children with physical disabilities is for them to be completely included in regular classes (1 respondent), to be partly included in regular classes (2 respondents), in regular schools but in the special education department (2 respondents), primarily in special schools (1 respondent) or completely in special schools (1 respondent). Where children with autism are concerned, their choices were for them to be included in regular classes (1 respondent), partly included in regular classes (1 respondent), included in regular schools but in the special education department (2 respondents) or completely educated in special schools (3 respondents).

The results indicate that prejudices about students with disabilities or developmental difficulties are still present, at least in this small group of student teachers. If they can be perceived as being representative of the typical student teacher, then the implications of these findings are that it is of the utmost importance to change their attitudes, improve their knowledge and understanding of the relevant topics and improve their competences for working with SEN students in mainstream classes.

In the authors' view, the results can be summarised as follows. Note that the numbers in the table below represent the number of respondents for each question analysed above.

Students estimate that study programmes include:		During pre-service education, teachers have opportunities for:	
Observing qualified teachers working in classroom	4	Observing qualified teachers working in classroom	38
Observing fellow-students teaching in the classroom	7	Observing fellow-students teaching in the classroom	32
Supervised teaching in the classroom	7	Supervised teaching in the classroom	35
Observing/participating in parent-teacher meetings	2	Observing/participating in parent-teacher meetings	8

The authors also noted a high level of agreement between teacher educators and student teachers when identifying topics that are covered extensively in the study programmes.

Teacher Educators	Student Teachers
Communication (with parents and communities) as partners	Collaborative learning communication (with parents and communities) as partners
Interactive learning	Interactive learning
Social inclusion, intercultural education, impact of socioeconomic contexts on learning	Special needs education and child-centred learning

However, the authors also identified differences between teacher educators and student teachers: teacher educators emphasised social inclusion, intercultural education and the impact of socioeconomic contexts on learning, while student teachers emphasised collaborative learning communication, special needs education and child-centred learning.

The authors conclude that the similarities and differences identified between the views of teacher educators and student teachers may indicate the need for recognition of the wider societal dimension of education in pre-service education. Particular attention should be paid to understanding families and building competency for active collaboration with families and also to developing respect for diversity and differences in the broadest sense among students.

From our perspective, it seems that there is awareness of the social significance of inclusive education. The existing awareness contributes to the partial acceptance of children with disabilities and RAE children being educated in mainstream schools. This acceptance, even if not complete, adds to the need to review and update pre-service teacher education programmes so that they become more sensitive to diversity and the needs of individual students. There is a high level of agreement among the research respondents that issues

relating to school students with special needs need to permeate all courses across pre-service teacher education programmes.

However, while it is important for student teachers to develop positive attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills to work with children with special needs, it is also vital to widen the concept of inclusion to encompass the full diversity of all possible backgrounds of school students.

Therefore, more practical school experience, seminars and experience exchanges are needed by student teachers to equip them better for working positively with all kinds of school pupils. It is hoped that this may help student teachers to overcome prejudices and other obstacles so that full inclusion can be implemented.

5.2 In-service training

The following table⁵⁷ gives an overview of teaching and non-teaching staff in Montenegro according to the level of educational establishment in which they work.

Educational system employees	2008/2009 school year
Pre-school teaching staff	1,009
Pre-school non-teaching staff	469
Primary education teaching staff	4,855
Primary education non-teaching staff	1,904
Secondary education teaching staff	2,297
Secondary education non-teaching staff	723

The basic provisions for teacher training are given in the General Law on Education, which stipulates that teachers have the right and duty to continuously develop professionally through various forms of development (individual, group, formal and informal). The main goals of such training are: (1) the professional development of teachers; (2) individual progression of teachers and (3) improvement of the quality and efficiency of the educational system. The system of training and professional development of teachers is designed to upgrade pre-service levels of professional education. The Bureau for Education Services and the Centre for Vocational Education select in-service programmes from providers on the basis of a public tender.

Professional development of all staff employed in education is the responsibility of the Centre for Continuous Professional Development attached to the Bureau for Education Services. Its goals are: (1) the creation and organisation of programmes for continuous professional development of teachers (all levels of schooling: pre-school, primary and secondary), expert associates, principals and deputy principals; (2) the creation of a system of promotion related to professional development and (3) continuous cooperation with faculties that deliver teacher education. The Bureau for Education Services trains staff in schools and prepares educational

⁵⁷ Ministry of Education and Science database.

programmes, catalogues and manuals for primary education, general secondary education and general education subjects in vocational secondary schools, publishing these as a rolling programme.

Manuals for school pedagogues, psychologists and teachers (Inclusive Education: Kindergarten and School Fit for a Child, Numbers 1 and 2) were developed by Save the Children UK, the Bureau for Education Services and the Ministry of Education and Science. Based on examples of good practice that parallel everyday work, they are intended for active use by teachers, expert associates and parents. Another published product of the Bureau for Education Services is Putokaz, an instrument for assessing acquired reading and writing skills with the aim of identifying students with specific difficulties in acquiring knowledge and skills.

There is also a suite of programmes referring to the inclusive education of students with special education needs, developed in partnership with Save the Children UK and available through the Bureau for Education Services (Specificity of Educational Work with Students with Special Needs, Towards Full Inclusion, Towards Inclusion in High School Education, Adjustment of Mathematical Content To SEN Students, Index for Inclusion, Role of a Pedagogue in Inclusive Programmes, Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools, Working with Students with Intellectual Difficulties, Integration of Roma Children in Kindergartens and Primary Schools, Support for Inclusion, Education Against Prejudices).

Attendance at 270 seminars and training sessions regarding school and education reform in the period 2004 to 2008 was 5,375 training teachers and 202 training school managers. In June 2009, 140 teachers completed training programmes in the field of inclusive education. Since 2005, 486 teachers have completed the training programmes. All the trained teachers had the opportunity to obtain general information on the basic principles of inclusion as an integral part of seminars organised to endorse the education reform goals. Also, the processes for teacher professional development at the school level and of system performance evaluation of teachers are ongoing.

External in-service training providers

A significant amount of in-service teacher education is also delivered by external agencies. As part of in-service training organised in cooperation with Save the Children UK, by the end of 2007/2008 a total of 1,023 teachers had been trained for inclusive education in schools and pre-schools. In 2008 and 2009 the number of trained teachers and professional staff was 596. In addition, teams of trainers for inclusive education have been formed from trained teachers who received further training for trainers in order to be able to cascade training further through the national teaching force. In partnership with STAZE, an NGO, defectologists from special classes have been educated to work in regular education. Save the Children UK also helps prepare institutions—residential special schools for children with hearing impairments, children with physical and visual impairments and children with cognitive disabilities and with autism—for transformation into resource centres by training defectologists working in these institutions to collaborate with mainstream teachers.

In a Finnish project for the development of inclusive education in Montenegro (Towards Inclusive Education) organised in 2006-2008, training sessions were attended by 40 school directors and assistant directors, 38 advisors from the Bureau for Education Services for the improvement of educational processes, 39 teachers and other professionals. Postgraduate studies in inclusive education were attended by 27 school psychologists, pedagogues and teachers.

In cooperation with UNICEF and Handicap International (through its project for Educating the Commissions for the Orientation of Children with Special Needs in the Education System), training in capacity building of

members of the Commission was conducted. The model for assessing the relationship between personal and environmental factors in the development of special educational needs was introduced in this training.

As part of the OECD project Education Development for Students at Risk and Those with Disabilities in South Eastern Europe, a national overview of the situation in the field of inclusive education was conducted, some teaching staff members from a model school were trained in methods and techniques of working with SEN students and a database for SEN students was established.

The Our Initiative-Union of Parents of Children with Disabilities provided assistants for SEN students in regular schools. The main purpose was to facilitate quality education for SEN students. This was realised with the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science, through its project for piloting assistance for students with disabilities educated using the inclusive model, which provided professional developmental experience for the staff involved as well as for others. The Association of Youth with Disabilities conducted a project on the promotion of inclusive education, which involved research about secondary school students with disabilities in regular and special schools and the promotion of its results through campaigns. It also promoted opportunities for youth with disabilities in higher education. Projects such as these, conducted by non-teachers but involving teachers, are deeply developmental in terms of collaboration.

Field research data

The respondents from the group of decision makers consider that the first feedback on the system of professional development of teachers in Montenegro is very positive: teachers participate in training as participants and as trainers. However, they judge that this training of teachers for the improvement of methodological and didactic theoretical knowledge in vocational education is implemented through various non-continuous and often short-term projects and therefore cannot be considered to be a systemic approach to continuous professional development of teachers.

School managers consider that it is important to extend in-service training and provide better coverage of topics—such as problematic behavior in school students, empathic working with students and colleagues, developmental psychology and Roma culture and way of life—so as to remove prejudices. They appreciate that a large number of seminars for professional development have been realised—resulting, they believe, in enhanced professional competencies in teachers and more positive attitudes of school staff. They conclude that the Professional Development of Teachers in School programme is well designed and attends to the needs and reality of schools. However, they stress the need to pay more attention to secondary vocational education.

Teachers in primary schools have had many training opportunities. Lower primary teachers and subject teachers both need more knowledge and skills for work with SEN students (as observed by the authors in practice and confirmed by teachers and teacher educators in the research). Teachers in secondary vocational education have not received any training in this area. Also, the authors found differences in relation to different groups of teachers in terms of motivation, willingness to accept innovations and use of their initiative to adjust their teaching process and methods to suit individuals or sub-groups.

The research also found that in-service training does not provide enough knowledge and self-confidence to teachers to work optimally with children with special needs and to deal with diversities. Teacher respondents were of the opinion that the Bureau for Education Services should be mandated to determine the standards of applied knowledge (curriculum and programme details) for SEN students.

According to our respondents, during in-service training, differences emerge in relation to teachers' motivation and willingness to accept innovations. As a result, it is noticeable that personal initiative to develop and use

individual education plans with students is not often sufficient. Teachers develop these plans under pressure and view them as an imposition. Therefore, there is resistance towards individual teaching and a lack of inventiveness and creativity, especially when teachers are required to apply the principles of interactive teaching.

Furthermore, the focus groups showed that teachers are not informed about their role and obligations related to the Committee for the Orientation of Children with Special Needs (teachers, especially, expected the committee to accurately and clearly guide the school about working with a child). Some respondents believe that there has been enough teacher training for this type of work, while teachers themselves do not feel sufficiently self-confident to realise this activity independently. From this disagreement stems yet further disagreement about teacher roles in evaluating student achievement. Some believe that the evaluation process is a simple logical process based on the creation of an individual education plan with individualised learning targets for which teachers are trained. However, teachers remain unconvinced because of their lack of familiarity with individualised standards of student achievement and their unwillingness to become more familiar through practice. They perceive the solution to be yet more training.

When it comes to teacher preparedness for developing inclusive culture among students, teacher focus groups (both elementary and secondary)⁵⁸ indicated the following:

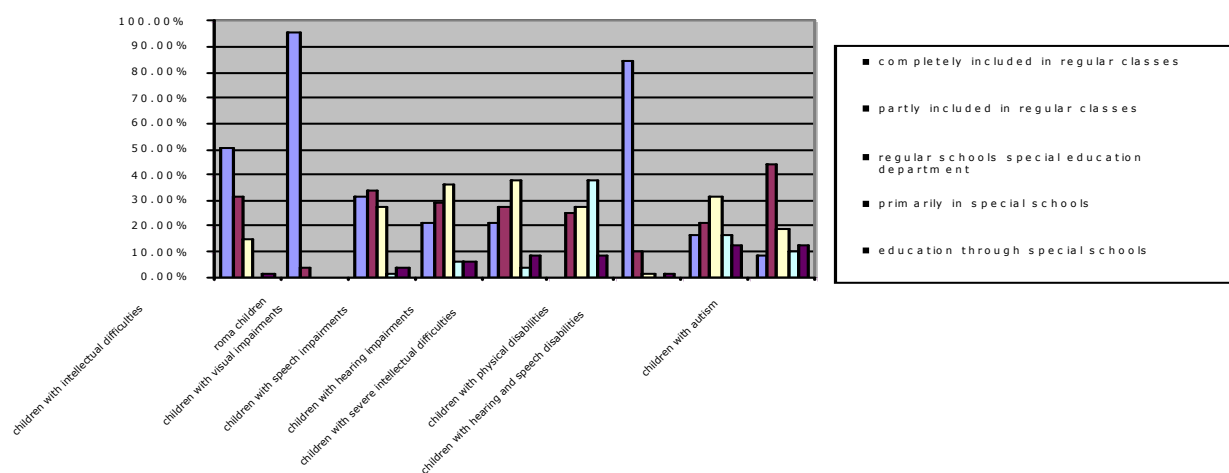
Students, in general, understand and respect diversity because it is characteristic of students. But, at the same time adolescents need to belong and connect to the group and to tend to their own security and so they choose to reject and exclude those who are perceived as different. For this reason it is very difficult to find the balance, especially when teachers do not have additional training and information on how to solve those situations.

Similar concerns were put forward by parents. They indicated the importance of preparing students and staff for the developmental phase of puberty, which is delicate for the students with or without disabilities.

Overall, the authors are inclined to conclude that the participation of teachers in in-service training to date has contributed to the development of some degree of affirmative inclusive attitudes toward students with disabilities and towards RAE students, at least amongst the teachers consulted (see Figure 1).

⁵⁸ Focus group discussions with elementary and secondary school teachers.

Figure 1. Teacher attitudes to ways of schooling particular groups of students



However, teachers still need more support and additional knowledge of the characteristics of specific disabilities, training in topics such as prejudices, beliefs and attitudes, greater understanding of the principle that every child can learn, more practical work experience in schools and direct contact with children from different backgrounds and with different abilities, access to good practice manuals, etc.

From the authors' perspective, at the policy level the pre-conditions for continuous teacher professional development (individual, group, formal and informal) are well designed. Teachers can choose educational programmes from catalogues and use manuals, both of which are both delivered. A large number of teacher in-service education courses have been realised. The evidence from the research suggests (although it cannot be proven) that this has resulted in some level of increased professional competency and in more positive attitudes in teachers.

Nevertheless, the weakness in the in-service level of education—as in pre-service training—is most obviously noted by respondents in the provision for subject teachers and teachers in secondary general and vocational education. In-service education should actually compensate for the shortfall in pre-service teacher education for inclusion, but instead continues the deficit. It seems both from the research findings and from the authors' shared experiences and observations, that these teachers need additional knowledge and skills to work with students, particularly SEN students, and to build competences to address diversity in the classroom.

The authors found anomalies in and gaps between teacher working habits, competences, preconceptions and attitudes. The authors believe that in-service teacher education has a key role to play in overcoming these problems through continuous education, professional support and better communication with families and amongst school staff, especially amongst teachers and school service staff (psychologists, pedagogues, etc).

The research produced significant amounts of data from data-rich informants, albeit in a qualitative study of limited scope from which no generalisable solutions to the shortcomings in inclusion may be identified. However, some findings from the study, in line with its scope, can suggest ways ahead and be added to widespread consensual views from knowledgeable and experienced individuals, among them professionals from the education and the non-governmental sectors, professionals to be (student teachers), parents and school pupils themselves.

The authors suggest that minimum standards in addressing equality and anti-discrimination in Montenegrin education that need to be met most urgently are the following: early rehabilitation strategies for children and students with special needs whose conditions would respond to such strategies, well-designed in-service teacher education for full social inclusion of all students (which requires both real systemic and personal respect for diversity) and additional professional support. This should all be underpinned by the promotion of inclusion as a broad concept—as in this ETF study—encompassing the full range of student abilities and backgrounds.

6. STAKEHOLDER SUGGESTIONS

Although not originally envisaged, the interviewed stakeholders and the participants in the focus groups provided numerous views on the improvements needed in the current education system and in the preparation of teachers in the light of inclusion. Since not many reports have been published that also map the constructive views of different stakeholders, particularly teachers, regarding the education system and pre-service and in-service education of teachers in the context of social and cultural diversity, it seemed relevant to provide an outline of the collected opinions. Therefore, the following chapter provides an overview of recommendations and suggestions made by different stakeholders who participated in the study or who responded to consultation regarding the draft at the ETF Regional Meeting on Inclusive Education in Turin held on 9-10 December 2009. These were seen as relevant to the process of teacher education for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity.

6.1 Policy makers

Our respondents from the system-level decision-maker group perceived the following problems:

1. Lack of conditions in most schools for individualised teaching (the number of students in the classroom, organization and storage equipment, teaching materials, etc)
2. Lack of assistants for SEN students in order to be able to offer them practical support in classrooms
3. Lack of staff (particularly specialists in SEN) to support children with disabilities and their teachers
4. Lack of assistants of Roma origin or with knowledge of the Romani language
5. Lower levels of inclusion and less training of teachers on ways of including diverse pupils in secondary level education, with special emphasis on secondary vocational education;
6. Slow and inefficient application of the rules for the advancement of teachers to higher status
7. Other problems include underdeveloped mechanisms for tracking children of school age who are not in the school system or who leave at the earliest opportunity, low educational achievement and continuing high drop-out rates for students of RAE origin.

Local government representatives have recommended additional fiscal decentralization and the redirection of fiscal revenues from the state to municipalities, as this would increase the financial capabilities to create conditions for full integration of populations locally. They also thought that some areas of responsibility for primary and secondary education should be transferred to the local level.

The role of local communities must be greater for the policy of registration of children especially in secondary and higher education. Enrolment policy should be harmonised with the needs of local communities.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Refik Bojadžić, President of the Parliament of Bijelo Polje.

Finally, local government representatives concluded and recommended increased coverage and greater support within teacher education for the development and implementation of new programmes on working with students with specific problems and broader programmes addressing the development of intercultural sensitivity. Training in vocational education should be organized in a way that secure establishment of Montenegrin trainers. Those mean that process of training for trainers would organized, coordinate and monitored by state institution. That would ensure a sustainable knowledge, skills and competencies for inclusion, which will not be depend on the international NGOs and other international trainers. The decisions of the Committees for the Orientation of Students with Special Needs should be improved and standards clearly defined. The basic studies course in all teacher education institutions should include a subject covering methods of working with SEN students. A sustainable specialist studies course for inclusive education and a department for training professionals for the rehabilitation and education of children with special educational needs should be established.

6.2 Teacher trainers/educators

6.2.1 Pre-service

Trainers suggested that the concept of education at the teacher education institutions should be changed to apply new educational models, introduce innovations in approaches to teaching, include subjects dealing with methods of working with SEN students and include more practical work during studies in order to ensure high quality education staff who can deal with the challenges of modern concepts of education.

In the opinion of school managers, teachers still display prejudices about students with disabilities and from the RAE population. It is important to improve their knowledge about this topic and also to improve competences for work with SEN and RAE students.

Implicitly or explicitly their views suggested that school managers believed the following teacher competences were important for inclusive education:

- Using various forms of assessment to help students learn and improve instructions
- Adapting curricula to meet the needs of particular pupils
- Recognizing and respecting cultural and individual differences
- Being able to recognise special needs and provide for them or seek help
- Being able to recognise gifted pupils and provide appropriately for them
- Encouraging intercultural respect and understanding amongst pupils
- Believing in the educability of every child.

6.2.2 In-service

According to the respondents, it is necessary to adopt the concept of lifelong learning, especially focusing on topics such as prejudices, learning about Romani culture and tradition, adoption of the principle of bilingualism in the teaching process, individualised approaches within the learning process, etc.

Trainers were of the opinion that the biggest obstacles and problems are reflected in the lack of literature, lack of resources and large numbers of students in classes. Teachers do not have the specific support they need (e.g., support from assistants in both teaching and professional services and the engagement of specialists from mobile teams) in order to improve the quality of teamwork and ultimately of student attainments.

Teachers understand that inclusion is necessary and that the introduction of children with special educational needs is justified, but their actual professional behaviour shows only declarative but not genuine practical acceptance, because they lack sufficient knowledge to work with SEN students.⁶⁰

Teachers also stress the need to implement and respect the legal regulations about standards relating to the number of students in classes. There should be smaller numbers of students in classes. If this were implemented, it would be easier for teachers to apply knowledge (from pre-service through to in-service) and to implement inclusion. Also, help and support for teachers should be provided through the engagement of volunteers (students from teaching faculties would be appropriate), especially to help with school students with severe difficulties (intellectual disabilities, behavioural problems, autism, etc.).

Our respondents also consider it necessary for school staff to continue their professional development for working with students with disabilities and with RAE students (especially in schools in which Roma pupils are integrated). Professional development must be based on practical experience and concrete examples.

Respondents also consider that in-service teacher development must also include systemic evaluation of training and the resulting development and continuing support for teachers.

Regarding the competences necessary and/or desirable for the development of inclusive education, teacher educators thought that teachers needed greater representation of inclusive and intercultural content and subject matter in their courses through the establishment of interdisciplinary departments in faculties and specialist and postgraduate studies for inclusive education and intercultural pedagogy. Romani language and culture could be introduced as an optional subject in teacher education courses, leading to more effective inclusive education of Roma and higher and more lasting enrolment. The development of interpersonal communication skills in teachers could lead to greater recognition and understanding of the problems which students of particular ages face and also enhance understanding of developmental issues in students. Working on teacher awareness of their own stereotypes and prejudices was also perceived as important. Finally, teacher educators thought it necessary to encourage student teachers to work in schools and kindergartens as part of their courses and also as volunteer assistants.

⁶⁰ Vesna Dimitrijević, inclusive education trainer.

6.3 Teachers

Teachers consider that the educational system does not provide adequate conditions in which to meet the needs of students with special needs. Teachers are capable of identifying talented students, but at present the emphasis is placed on students with disabilities. The underlying reason for this difference may lie in teachers finding it easier to adjust the basic curriculum programmes upwards through additional teaching and setting up learning-research groups which allow for the expression and further development of talent.

In relation to the development and application of individual education plans, teachers think that it is necessary to allow time to recognise and assess student characteristics, abilities, strengths and weaknesses. This would permit real understanding of student capabilities as a basis for individual education plans. Teachers have the freedom and independence to choose their methodology and materials for use in the classroom. On the other hand, this independence and freedom means that they themselves must arrange the way to work with students from the outset. Teachers consider that the optimal number of students in the classroom should be no more than 25, especially if the development and application of individual education plans is to be put into practice effectively.

Teacher respondents also stressed the importance of better financial motivation through higher salaries. They believe that financial satisfaction would lead to better quality work in classrooms. They think that pre-service and in-service education must be strengthened and that they should have better working resources and more modern books for students and teachers. However, they also believe that teaching staff have the capacity for addressing all aspects of the reform process provided their position and status in society is improved and their education and knowledge valued. They also wished for opportunities to put peer support into practice and to develop exchanges of experiences among schools, possibly through the development of clusters of schools working together.

7. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Findings

The government of Montenegro launched all-encompassing reforms of the education system in 2000, which resulted in legislative changes across all education levels. The outlined principles of the reform underpin the social inclusion strategies in Montenegro, in particular through the increased involvement and support of parents and local communities with schools, the introduction of quality indicators and standards, the introduction of open and flexible curricula, the use of textbooks free of ideological, religious and other biases and the overall promotion of child-centred approaches to teaching (OSI, 2007).

In addition to overall educational reform, Montenegro has invested significant efforts in developing strategies and legislation for the creation of an inclusive education system. The concept of inclusion adopted in Montenegro focuses the strategies developed most on particularly vulnerable groups, especially the RAE population and children with special needs. The adopted strategies and legislation focusing on inclusion do show initial results, i.e., increased numbers of children with special needs in schools, use of the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002, Montenegrin/Serbian edition, 2009) to monitor inclusiveness, inclusion of Roma in mainstream classes rather than in special schools, etc.

With regard to minorities, the national legislation in the field of education reflects the constitutional guarantees of education for minorities at the level of the general objectives and principles of education, as well as at the level of provision for individuals. Stemming from the constitutional rights and the national legislation, the education of students from minority backgrounds is organised in their mother tongue. The curriculum is identical to that of the mainstream curriculum with additional classes in the mother tongue and literature.

Bearing in mind the emphasis on the inclusion of children with disabilities, the teachers interviewed primarily discussed particular competences needed for work with students with disabilities. Teachers particularly emphasised the importance of competences to create and apply individual education plans. Teachers felt competent to recognise the individual needs of students, but identified a clear lack of competence to actually cater for the identified needs.

In the authors' view, teachers prioritised the competences directly used in their own classrooms. Therefore, teachers rarely mentioned the broader competences required to support student cognitive, emotional and moral development or the competences necessary to build relationships with parents and the local community and to build knowledge and understanding of documents and principles underpinning social inclusion, anti-discrimination strategies, etc. Furthermore, the teachers stressed the importance of developing professional support mechanisms for teachers through specialist services in addition to developing their own competences. A particular problem, in this regard, is the non-existence of higher education programmes in fields relevant for building specialist teachers support services in Montenegro.

The review of pre-service programmes in teaching pointed towards a clear difference between teachers of social sciences and teachers of natural sciences and also with regard to teachers teaching professional subjects in vocational education. Unlike the teachers in social sciences, these latter teachers lack basic education in psychology, pedagogy, didactics, etc. The primary focus of their education is not the profession of teaching as such, but their particular subject. Therefore, effective solutions should be found through in-service programmes for teachers already within the education system, while pre-service education should be amended to address the training of future generations of such teachers.

Furthermore, the overall review of pre-service education of teachers also indicates a lack of practical knowledge of didactics, particularly methods, and also of developmental and pedagogical psychology. Furthermore, within the various programmes, inclusive education is not an integral guiding principle, but is, rather, promoted through a number of additional, sometimes optional, subjects focusing primarily on special needs education.

In the opinion of respondents, inclusive education should enable more emphasis to be placed on individual work and ensuring student access to what is being taught (not treating students only as part of the group). They thought it important to encourage an interest in students as people with all their problems and dilemmas, not only to show interest in their attainments. It is necessary to create teachers' understanding of their own behaviour and its influence on the behaviour of students. Teacher educators themselves pointed out that the concept of education at the Faculty of Teacher Education should be redirected towards applying new educational models and innovations in teaching approaches, augmented with several subjects dealing with methods of working with students with special educational needs as well as more practical work, thus ensuring the development of more knowledgeable staff who can deal with the challenges of modern education concepts.

It seems that there is awareness of the social significance of inclusive education amongst teacher educators and student teachers. The existing awareness contributes to the partial acceptance of children with disabilities and RAE children being educated in mainstream schools. This acceptance, even if not complete, adds to the need to review and update pre-service teacher education programmes so that they become more sensitive to diversity and the needs of individual students. There is a high level of agreement among the respondents that issues relating to school students with special needs need to permeate all courses in pre-service teacher education programmes. However, while it is important for student teachers to develop positive attitudes, understanding, knowledge and skills to work with children with special needs, it is also vital to widen the concept of inclusion to encompass the full diversity of all possible backgrounds of school students.

The professional development of all staff employed in education is the responsibility of the Centre for Continuous Professional Development, within the Bureau for Education Services. The Bureau for Education Services trains staff in schools and prepares educational programmes, catalogues and manuals for primary education, general secondary education and general education subjects in vocational secondary schools, publishing these as a rolling programme. The main goals of such training are: (1) the professional development of teachers; (2) the individual progress of teachers; and (3) the improvement of quality and efficiency of the educational system. The system of training and professional development of teachers is designed to upgrade pre-service levels of professional education. A significant amount of in-service teacher education is also delivered by external agencies.

Overall, the authors are inclined to conclude that the participation of teachers in in-service training to date has contributed to the development of some degree of affirmative inclusive attitudes toward students with disabilities and towards RAE students, at least amongst the teachers consulted.

However, teachers still need more support and additional knowledge about the characteristics of specific disabilities and training in relation to the nature of prejudices, beliefs and attitudes and how they affect teaching and learning. They need to grasp the principle that every child can learn and they need more practical work experience in schools and direct contact with children from different backgrounds and of different abilities, accompanied by access to good practice manuals, etc.

From the authors' perspective, at the policy level the pre-conditions for continuous teacher professional development (individual, group, formal and informal) are well designed. Teachers have the opportunity to choose educational programmes and manuals from catalogues, both of which are delivered to schools.

Nevertheless, the weakness at the in-service and pre-service levels of education is most obviously noted by respondents in the provision for subject teachers and teachers in secondary general and vocational education. In-service education should actually compensate for the shortfall in pre-service teacher education for inclusion, but instead continues the deficit. From the research findings and from the authors' shared experiences and observation, it seems that these teachers need additional knowledge and skills to work with students (particularly SEN students) and to build competences to address diversity in the classroom.

7.2 Recommendations

The authors believe the inclusion-related attitudes of teachers and the influence of these attitudes on the implementation of inclusion to be an important link that highlights the importance of individual teachers. In and out of their classrooms, teachers are examples on whom children may to a greater or lesser extent model their own behaviours and attitudes towards inclusion. It seems, from our small-scale research and from extensive professional experience, that teachers are not fully prepared to grasp the concept of social inclusion in its broadest sense during their pre-service education and in-service training. More emphasis is put on students with disabilities than on the broader issues of social and culture diversity.

The authors also found differences in levels of understanding and respect for diversity in teachers which, in our view, is largely dependent on how much and what kind of information teachers have about their students.

There is some disagreement as to the role of school management in defining the agenda for further improvement in teaching competences, based on its view of the school's needs and teacher estimates about needs for in-service training aiming at improving teaching competences. Similar tensions exist in the definition of the respective roles of school management and teachers in dealing with a number of issues related to inclusion, e.g., appropriate class size to properly integrate SEN children, workload required to properly deal with inclusion-related issues, etc. These tensions are enhanced by a lack of clarity as to the role of teachers in the whole process.

Based on the research findings presented and discussed in this report, the authors propose the conclusions and recommendations listed immediately below.

The campaign to promote inclusive education has to be both long term and strategic. Bearing in mind the present emphasis on the integration of children with disabilities in regular schools, the campaign should now be widened to focus more on issues of diversity and cultural differences and so ensure broader social inclusion.

In pre-service teacher education, methods of teaching in initial studies should be modernised. This would ensure that teacher educators themselves are able to teach using modern approaches. The modernization should also be based on an agreed set of teacher competences that would address social inclusion and education for all.

The basic studies of (all) faculties should, in the shorter term, introduce a module covering methods of working with SEN children. The Faculty of Philosophy should, in the longer term, consider prioritizing the adaptation of all subjects related to teacher education (pedagogy, psychology, didactics, methodologies, etc) so that issues and approaches important in disseminating the fundamentals of inclusive education are mainstreamed through

all subjects as appropriate, rather than presented as something to be tagged on. This would, in the longer term, apply to teacher education for all teachers.

A solution for teachers in vocational education needs to be found. A systematic approach should be applied to ensure education in the subjects relevant for the teaching profession in faculties where such competences are not part of their university programmes (e.g., engineering). Possible solutions could be sought through cooperation between faculties and through the development of in-service programmes in cooperation with the Faculty of Philosophy that target those teachers in particular.

Due to the lack of education programmes for specialists in special needs education, a programme or a faculty for this purpose should be opened in Montenegro.

In-service teacher education should, in the longer term, offer a wide range of choices of short and longer courses that underpin the national priorities in education, such as the development of inclusive schools. By taking courses from the available menu, teachers will be able to contribute to the improvement of their school and Montenegro's educational aspirations while developing their own professionalism and promotion prospects throughout their careers.

At the school level changes are also needed. Additional lessons for children should be prioritised, particularly mentoring lessons, where children take additional specialised classes with appropriately trained staff that are tailored to their particular situation and requirements.

School management should be encouraged to participate in in-service programmes in inclusive education so that they may engage strongly in leading their school towards inclusion, while working with all staff, students and their families and the community to do so.

It is necessary to optimise the enrolment of RAE children in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools and to ensure their continuing welcome and support.

The changes needed at the systemic level are numerous. Collaboration with specialised institutions in terms of the implementation of partial inclusion must start immediately. It is important to improve the decisions of the Committees for the Orientation of Children with Special Needs (clearer instructions for adaptation and working in schools with SEN students) and at the same time harmonise it with the Examinations Centre's use of individual education plans as the basis for assessment of the attainments of particular students in the shorter term. It should be mandatory for parents to accept educating their child in an inclusive programme if a Committee for the Orientation of Children with Special Needs decides that is in the best interest of a child. Also, in the medium term, the decisions of the committee should also become compulsory at the secondary school level.

The Bureau for Education Services must become immediately and actively involved in advising and monitoring the quality control of teaching. At the same time, the institutional standards for SEN students must be defined clearly in the shorter term. It is necessary to improve communication across the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Education Services, between municipalities and schools, etc. in the medium term.

The Centre for Vocational Education should develop in-service teacher education immediately, for delivery as soon as possible, especially to teachers with engineering degrees and of practical subjects.

In order to support the improved legislation and pre-conditions for inclusion, specific multi-professional networks should be created in the short term, drawing on personnel from education, health and social services,

so as to facilitate collaboration in early diagnosis, early intervention and educational inclusion as well as in any support services necessary for the child and the family.

It will be necessary to ensure the transfer of the portfolios of children/students with special needs from pre-school, through elementary and secondary school until university or employment. That should, in the longer term, ensure supported progress through the whole schooling process.

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ANNEX 1 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Pre-service teacher education. Education that teacher candidates are requested to undergo in order to qualify for employment in teaching, including both programmes specifically designed for future teachers and programmes in which students study a disciplinary area that is an equivalent of a school subject.

In-service teacher training. Education and training activities engaged in by primary and secondary school teachers and heads, following their initial professional certification, and intended mainly or exclusively to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they can educate students more effectively.

Pre-school education. Education in pre-school institutions or schools that precede primary education and serves as a preparation for mainstream education.

Primary education. Education in primary schools, including a lower cycle in which classes are taught in all subject areas by a class teacher, and an upper cycle in which different teachers teach different subject areas.

Secondary education. Post-primary education in any secondary school, whether academic or vocational.

Teacher. General term for those qualified to teach at any level of school, including pre-school teachers, primary class or subject teachers and secondary school teachers.

Teacher educator. University professor or other college or higher education institution lecturer who teaches student teachers in pre-service education and who provides training for practising teachers in primary and secondary schools.

Student teacher. A student studying at a pre-service institution that prepares primary class or subject teachers and academic and vocational secondary school teachers.

Probation teacher. A teacher who is qualified academically but who does not yet have enough teaching practice to be granted a full license to teach.

Mentor teacher. A teacher who is qualified, promoted or assigned to monitor student teachers when they visit schools for practical experience.

Additional support needs. The need of children and young people for extra support in order to be able to benefit from school education at any time and for any reason (e. g., very able students, students whose education is disrupted by illness or by being a refugee, students with a chaotic home life, bilingual learners, etc).

Special educational needs. The needs of students who have physical, sensory or cognitive or other specific disabilities or any combination of these. It might also include students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

ANNEX 2 | MONTENEGRO EDUCATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW

As provided for under the 2002 Law on General Education, the Montenegrin educational system consists of pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, vocational education and adult education.

Pre-school education is provided in pre-schools and nurseries to children aged 0–3 years old and in kindergartens to children aged 3–6 years old). Pre-school education is offered in full-day, half-day or three-hour educational programmes. Parents have the right to choose whether and in what type of pre-school education their children will enrol.

Primary education is compulsory for all children aged 6–15 years old (duration nine years). Primary education is divided into three cycles: cycle 1 (grades 1–3), cycle 2 (grades 4–6) and cycle 3 (grades 7–9). Each cycle requires a different kind of educational process and different class norm requirements. Primary education is also arranged in two stages: stage 1 corresponds to cycles 1 and 2 (ages 6–11) and stage 2 to cycle 3 (ages 12–14).

Secondary education is provided through high schools (gymnasiums), art schools or vocational schools and lasts four years. High schools accept children under 17 years old who have completed primary education, in accordance with criteria defined by legislation. An external 'mature' examination is taken in both compulsory and optional subjects at the end of secondary school. Vocational education offers three degrees of education: lower vocational education (lasting two years), general vocational education (lasting three or four years, depending on the programme) and higher vocational education. General secondary schools are open to children who have completed primary education and are not older than age 17. In some circumstances a pupil older than 18 years may be enrolled, based on the approval of a panel of teachers. Enrolment is the responsibility of the Enrolment Committee, formed by the professional body defined by the statute of the school. Preliminary examination is not compulsory but can be undertaken in cases where the school has capacities and facilities for such an examination.

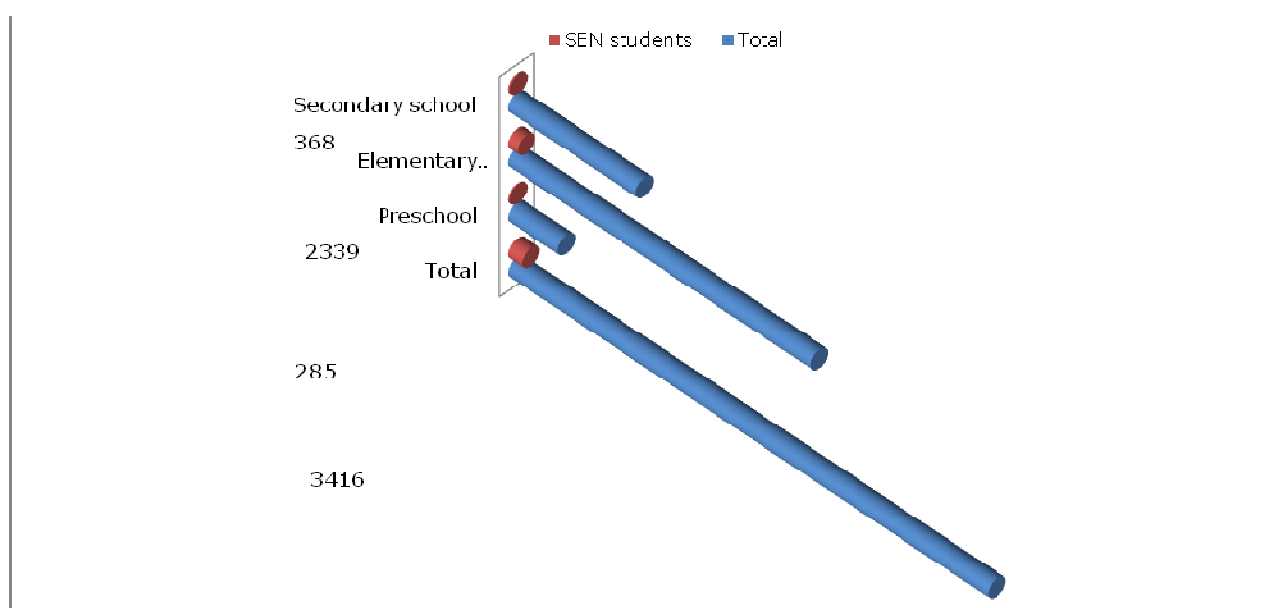
In Montenegro there are 21 public kindergartens, 162 public elementary schools and 49 secondary schools (10 public gymnasiums, 26 secondary vocational schools and 11 secondary mixed schools (parallel gymnasium and vocational schools) and 2 private gymnasiums). There are also 33 adult education providers licensed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Student and staff numbers, according to the Ministry of Education and Science database for the 2009/2010 school year (from kindergarten to secondary school and excluding adult and higher education), are as follows:

Total number of students at all levels of education	117,642
Total number of employed at all levels of education	13,026

The 2002 reform of education has prolonged basic (compulsory) education to nine years, and children start going to school at the age of 6 years. The reformed elementary school is divided into three cycles of three years. The reformed school system completely opens the space for inclusion of students with special needs in regular classes. The Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs states that educational institutions are obliged to prepare individual education plans for students with special needs in cooperation with parents.

The individual education plan defines types of educational work for education authorities and subjects, and also the manner of providing additional expert help, transferability between programmes, adaptations in organization, assessment of student achievements, etc.

From the very beginning of the development of an inclusive education system—with the establishment of kindergartens in the development group for children with moderate to severe disability (1992) through to the integration of children with special needs in mainstream groups in kindergartens (1998) and the basic school inclusion of children with special needs in regular classes (2000)—this concept of inclusiveness has been accepted and adopted, and not only in terms of terminology. Children with special needs are starting to grow and develop as an integral part of society. The Montenegrin school system includes 3,416 SEN students (Ministry of Education and Science/FOSI-ROM, 2008), up from 2,415 SEN students in the previous year.



Special institutions offer possibilities for pre-school education, elementary and secondary (vocational) education:

1. Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of Persons with Hearing and Speech Impairment in Kotor
2. Institute for Education and Professional Rehabilitation of Disabled Children and Youth in Podgorica (physically disabled, blind and SIGHT-IMPAIRED children)
3. The First of June Centre for Education and Vocational Training in Podgorica (children with intellectual disabilities and autism)
4. Komanski Most Special Institute for Children and Youth in Podgorica (severe intellectual disability).

Schooling in these institutions in many of the cases imply of the need to change environment and separate children from their families. Regarding these special institutions, we need these changes: de-institutionalisation, transformation into resource centres, use of individual education plans and the development of a network of day care centres etc.

Education of other minorities is an integral part of a unified educational system, except for Albanian language and literature for Albanian students that followed education in Albanian language.

ANNEX 3 | TABLE OF COMPETENCES FOR INCLUSION

	basic	advanced
Personalised approach to learning	Improves competencies of all students	Innovates teaching to help all children learn
	Tailors teaching strategies to each child's needs	
	Uses various forms of assessment to help children learn and improve instruction	Designs and implements individual learning plans
	Works effectively with support staff	
	Adapts curricula to particular pupils	
	Guides and supports all learners	Pro-actively addresses inequities in materials, policies and so on
	Attends to students' cognitive development, and to their social-emotional and moral growth	
	Connects with students and their families at an interpersonal level	
Understanding and respect of diversity (gender, socio-economic groups, ability/disability, culture, language, religion, learning styles)	Recognises and respects cultural and individual differences	Uses students' backgrounds as scaffolding for teaching and learning
	Understands different values students and their families hold	
	Is aware of her own preconceptions and value stances	
	Recognises how her assumptions influence her teaching and relationships with different pupils	Learns languages
	Recognises that knowledge is value-laden, constructed by the learner and reciprocal	
	Is able to recognise pupils' special needs and provide for them or seek help	
Commitment to values of social inclusion	Is able to recognise gifted pupils' needs and provide appropriately for these	
	Encourages intercultural respect and understanding among pupils	
	Maintains high expectations regardless of students' background	Conducts research to advance understanding of education's contribution to social inclusion
	Treats all children with respect, affirms their worth and dignity	
	Believes in educability of every child	
	Helps all children develop into fully participating members of society	
	Understands the factors that create cohesion and exclusion in society	
	Understands the social and cultural dimensions of education	
	Understands the contribution of education to developing cohesive societies	
	Is familiar with conventions of the right of child and anti-discrimination	

Table developed on the basis of Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans (Pantić, 2008) and European documents such as Common European Principles for Teachers' Competences and Qualifications (EC, 2005) and Improving Competences for the 21st Century (EC, 2008c).

ANNEX 4 | RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Design

The figure below reads horizontally to show how the theoretical assumptions adopted in the conceptual framework inform corresponding parts of the research design and methodologies.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND (THEORIES, BELIEFS)		RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS
Competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and dispositions (Assumption 1)		The table of competences for inclusion developed in Pantić (2008) and key European documents were used for focus groups with teachers working in diverse environments
Teaching professionals themselves should be the main source of information in the process of defining teacher competence (Assumption 2)		
Social inclusion should be mainstreamed in all policies for teachers (general pluralism) and balanced with a targeted approach for children from marginalised/vulnerable groups (Assumption 3) Dispositions are predominantly socio-culturally developed (Assumption 4)		The country team looked into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policies and regulations - data from interviews with policy-makers, course designers, teacher educators, teachers, school principals, parents, community representatives and others
Programmes based on beliefs about knowledge being value-laden and constructed by the learner are more inclusion-friendly (Assumption 5)		Online survey of initial Teacher Education programmes including questions on course units, practical experiences, opportunities for reflection and dialogue, the beliefs of teacher educators
Teacher Education programme experiences building teacher competences for inclusion include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus on inclusion-relevant topics in courses - provision of practical experiences - opportunities for interaction with families - opportunities for critical reflection - opportunities for discussion and dialogue (Assumption 6)		Catalogues and other sources of information about in-service programmes
Cross-country similarities are important for policy making (similar heritage, prospective European integration and relevant policies and practices) (Assumption 7)		Collection of examples of best practices from the Western Balkans

Assumption 1: Competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and dispositions

The concept of competence is central to the three main questions addressed by this study:

- What teacher competences are needed for inclusive education in situations of social and cultural diversity?
- What is the current situation regarding the inputs, processes and outcomes of a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education?
- How can the situation regarding a) pre-service b) in-service teacher preparation for inclusive education be improved?

It is therefore necessary to outline the definition of competence as it is adopted in this study.

The concept of competence has gained popularity and credence in literature for teachers and teacher training on the international scale. Competence features in some key European documents for teachers (EC, 2005, 2008), some European projects on higher education curricula reform (Gonzales and Wagenaar, 2005) and recent studies in the Western Balkan region (Pantić, 2008; Rajović and Radulović, 2007; Zgaga, 2006).

Studies from the region invariably suggest that teacher training provides sound academic coverage of subjects and pedagogical knowledge on themes and issues, but that knowledge on how to identify and deal with problems in a real life setting is largely missing. Such expertise involves a combination of cognitive and practical knowledge and skills, but also values, motivation and attitudes - a combination widely referred to as 'competence' in the literature (Rajović and Radulović, 2007). It has been suggested that teacher education should be oriented toward the development of certain key competences that can help teachers perform effectively in their daily practice.

However, this competence-based model has been criticised for an overly narrow understanding of teacher expertise as the mere observable performance of daily teaching routines, downgrading the role of teacher to the simple technical implementation of policies and programmes. Critics argue that teaching is an ethical, normative profession that presupposes something of value is to be taught, whereupon they are bound to encounter problems that are not susceptible to resolution in value-neutral, technical terms (Carr, 1993). This is reflected in some of the most recent frameworks for competence (Tigelaar et al., 2004; Stoof et al., 2002) that adopt a view of competence that combines theoretical and practical knowledge and skills with attitudes and values.

This study adopts the broader view of competence as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A number of authors claim there is a specific body of knowledge necessary for working with 'special' children, and that these competences for inclusion need to be adequately covered during teacher preparation. Such training may involve developing an understanding of the socio-cultural factors that produce individual differences, or specialist knowledge on disability and children's learning needs, awareness of educational and social issues that can affect children's learning, and the like.

Another distinct stance operates on the basis that inclusion is not only about 'special' children, and that therefore teacher competence for inclusive educational practices should include skills relevant to improved teaching and learning for all, whilst reducing barriers to learning and participation.

This sort of approach could involve a multifaceted pedagogy recognising that: decisions taken to inform teaching should be based on children's individual characteristics; learning takes place outside school; learning must build on previous knowledge, individual and cultural experiences and interests (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

Teachers need to develop their dispositions alongside their knowledge and skills when considering competences for inclusion. Even the most comprehensive coverage of relevant themes is unlikely to anticipate every type of difficulty teachers might meet in their professional lives. Teachers undergoing preparation for inclusive education must be made to accept their responsibility to improve the learning and participation of all children, and be disposed to teach all learners equitably. Dispositions are tendencies for an individual to act in a particular manner under particular circumstances, based on their beliefs (Villegas, 2007). They involve teacher beliefs about the purposes of education, knowledge, learning and the educability of their students. The latter is of particular importance for inclusive education as this forms the basis of teacher expectations of their students. These expectations can lead them to treat students differently, resulting in positive or negative performance, aspirations and self-images dependent upon the original teacher assessments.

The definition of 'competence' as a combination of knowledge, skills and dispositions is reflected in the approach to both the definition of teacher competences and to the evaluation of existing policies and practices where all these aspects are featured.

Assumption 2: Changes in educational policies and practices fare better when they are congruent with teachers' beliefs about what is worthwhile in education

Growing research evidence states that the success of reforms introducing new practices such as inclusive education are critically dependent on their compatibility with teacher beliefs on the value of the change and transferability to daily teaching practices (Beijaard et al., 2000; Day, 2002; Day et al., 2007; Fives and Buehl, 2008; Wubbels 1995). Literature on change and innovation in education suggests that changes in education practices require careful consideration of the differences between the existing and desired models with a view to identifying consensual and/or competing forces in the change process. Changing systems are typically characterised by the coexistence of old and new 'states of affairs'. The emergent new state may have elements in common with the old one, and the wider apart the two states are initially, the more difficult the transition process will be (Anchan, Fullan and Polyzoi, 2003; Fullan 2007).

We must have a clear understanding of existing policies and practices of teacher preparation for inclusive education in the Western Balkan countries and of teachers' own perceptions of the competences they need and the help they require to develop these competences in order to identify the true extent of scope for improvement. An earlier study of teacher perceptions of competences conducted in the region (Pantić, 2008) reported that teachers attributed high importance to competences on equality and supporting the learning of all pupils. However, detailed study of examples of teacher preparation in the region showed current teacher preparation does not adequately cater for those competences as it does not provide enough opportunities to connect theoretical knowledge with actual teaching experiences in real-life classrooms and does not address issues such as parental and community involvement that would build teacher capacity to deal with a number of out-of-school factors relevant for inclusion.

Hence, teaching professionals themselves are the best source of information on how inclusion-relevant competences translate into their daily practices and what kind of support they need to develop those competences. However, school principals, parents and communities, government representatives, teacher educators and course designers, and relevant NGO and donor representatives must also be consulted regarding teacher competences for inclusion as these stakeholders can provide important insights into the context in which teachers operate.

Assumption 3: A philosophy of pluralism prevails among inclusive and culturally aware teachers

Educational inclusion is a much researched topic involving a number of challenges encountered in the policy-making and implementation processes. Interpretations of the notion of inclusive education itself vary from narrower senses as ‘the attempt to educate persons with intellectual disabilities by integrating them as closely as possible into the normal structures of the educational system’ (Michailakis and Reich, 2009) to broader definitions as a ‘guiding principle helping to accomplish quality Education for All (EFA) – education systems that benefit from diversity, aiming to build a more just, democratic society’ (Acedo, 2008), or even as a process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity.

This process helps a school to expand its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces all form of exclusion and degradation of pupils on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, or any other issue that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997; Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Peček et al, 2006). In this broader sense, inclusion is a process to increase participation and decrease exclusion, where participation equates to recognition, acceptance and respect, inclusion in the learning process and social activities in a way that enables an individual to develop a sense of belonging to a group.

Similarly, in the literature on intercultural education, a variety of approaches range from ‘culturalism’, which places an emphasis on cultural differences and a need to accommodate any differences seen as typical of entire groups, to approaches known as ‘pluralism’ (ethnic or general) in which the emphasis is placed on diversity within groups (with or without explicit reference to ethnic relations), involving working on good relations within and between groups and their educational opportunities. The latter comes close to the ‘equal opportunities approach’, built on a vision of intercultural education where the emphasis is on pupils from ethnic minority groups and their educational opportunities. Intercultural education is seen as a means of combating the educational disadvantages of pupils from an ethnic minority background (Leeman and Ledoux, 2005).

In this study, we adopt the broader view of inclusive education as a process to reduce exclusion and contribute to the opportunities and skills for participation in society of all pupils, whilst adopting a balance between general pluralism and an equal opportunities approach to intercultural education.

The rationale for this choice is grounded on the arguments that such approaches reduce the emphasis on ‘different’ or ‘additional’ needs and any ‘us and them’ kind of antithesis, and imply the extension of what is ‘generally available’ in order to improve the learning and social participation in of all children. Extending what is ‘generally available’ reduces the need to provide support for what is ‘different from’ or ‘additional to’. This approach is comparable to the architectural concept of ‘universal design’ where solutions are

anticipated by improved access for everyone and the avoidance of physical and other environmental barriers in the first place (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

The next argument in favour of the pluralist approach, is that a philosophy of pluralism prevails amongst culturally aware teachers (Ford and Trotman, 2001). Culturally aware teachers attempt to understand the worldviews of diverse students and respect them as different and legitimate. Educational research, even where it traditionally focuses on effective instruction and academic success, as in the Netherlands or Finland, recognises that quality of education is partly determined by the individual pupils, the moment and the context, and recognises that the professionalisation of teachers should focus more on 'diversity' and reflection of how diversity occurs in teachers' educational practice and on their actions on the basis of this reflection (Leeman and Volman, 2000).

Finally, the selected approach has the advantage of exposing two of the issues common in educational exclusion in the Western Balkans. Firstly, it is very common for schools to use subtle and not so subtle forms of exclusion (from the lack of communication with families and lack of language and learning support to physical barriers) to emit strong messages that some students are not welcome (Roma, ethno-linguistic minorities, disabled children) to the point that these children and their parents will seek segregation or avoid school altogether rather than experience rejection, humiliation or 'failure' in their local school.

Secondly, a pernicious notion of the school 'need to exclude' is exposed in some cases. This is phrased in terms of systemic factors that appear to place inclusion beyond the apparent benevolent human capacity of school staff to be more inclusive. Such exclusion is often voiced in regretful statements, such as "We would love to have more Roma children here but they come to us so late and are so behind in everything that they cannot pass the tests to progress up the school."

These systemic factors very often cover deeply held prejudices or profound ignorance of what can actually be done to include more diverse children, and these negative views often prevail over what is intended to be pro-inclusion legislation.

Assumption 4: Dispositions are predominantly socio-culturally developed

Socio-cultural theory offers a productive way of thinking about the development of teacher dispositions for inclusive education (Huizen et al, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Korthagen, 2004; Wubbels, 1992). In the Vygotskian tradition, the functioning and development of human individuals is studied in the context of participation in socio-cultural practices, of which teacher education is but one example. Individuals also learn and change through contact with other people in various contexts where people participate in activities. Such participation pre-supposes the 'moving inward' of social functions to be appropriated as psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1988-1999). In order to do this, individuals (teachers in this case) need an environment modelling an ideal standard and supporting conditions for a successful approximation of this standard – the zone of proximal development. They also need opportunities to explore public and social meanings behind the standard in relation to what makes participation personally meaningful to them.

Vygotskian and neo-Vygotskian theories on teacher preparation are important in consideration of the opportunities for the development of inclusive dispositions provided by existing policies and practices in pre-service and in-service teacher preparation. Teacher preparation needs to help teachers orientate themselves

towards the values and goals provided in the cultural and political setting of the schooling in which they engage. Other influential theories, such as Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Kolb and Fry, 1975) and Schön's notion of the reflective practitioner (1983) suggest that the learning processes of the professional are associated with making sense of concrete experiences. Professionals do not just apply theories. They learn by doing and engaging in on-the-spot problem-framing and experimentation followed by reflection. Student teachers need opportunities to exercise their judgment in practice.

Moreover, some of the most influential authors in the literature on teaching professionals argue that the role of the professional extends beyond reflection on their own practice into the wider societal context in which they find themselves (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). This will be taken into account when considering the context and mechanisms for supporting and motivating teachers to adopt inclusive dispositions, both during pre-service preparation and in-service practices.

Assumption 5: Programmes based on beliefs about knowledge being value-laden and constructed by the learner are more inclusion-friendly

A comparative study of teacher education programmes (Tatto, 1999) identified two types of approaches underlying the design of teacher preparation programmes characterised as 'constructivist' and 'conventional'.

Constructivist approaches seem to:

- look at teaching as a vehicle towards a more equal and just society
- encourage student-teachers to see themselves and their pupils as makers of meaning
- provide opportunities for learning through discussion, reflection on and challenges to traditional conceptions of the teacher role, learner role, subject matter and pedagogy
- allow learning to teach to occur in context.

On the other hand, conventional approaches seem to:

- be driven by technical views of teaching and learning to teach
- show a tendency to see pupils as fixed entities or uncritical recipients of knowledge
- aim at helping teachers to fit into pre-existing school structures
- divorce teaching knowledge about subject matter and pedagogy from practice.

The study showed that in constructivist programmes, where teachers were seen as professional individuals capable of making informed instructional choices, teachers had more opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills to adjust instruction to the diverse needs of learners.

This finding is relevant in the consideration of existing programmes of pre-service preparation of teachers. The above characteristics of programmes were included in the items of a survey designed to explore the

provision of, and assumptions underlying, teacher education programme designs and teacher educator beliefs about the nature of knowledge.

Assumption 6: The programme experiences that help student teachers develop culturally responsive dispositions include five dimensions

A qualitative study (Kidd et al, 2008) of student teacher accounts of the experiences within teacher education programmes that helped them develop competences for inclusion, showed the importance of the following teacher education components:

- focus on issues of culture, linguistic diversity, poverty and social justice in special course units
- provision of practical experiences in diverse classrooms
- interactions with diverse families
- opportunities for critical reflection
- opportunities for discussion and dialogue

The survey within this study on behalf of ETF explored the presence of the above elements in existing pre-service teacher preparation. In the future, the survey findings will be used to consider how these key components can be enhanced to support teachers in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively increase the learning of all pupils, and to provide experiences that enable student teachers to examine issues relevant to social inclusion and understand how their own values, beliefs and teaching practices are shaped by their cultural backgrounds and prior experiences.

Assumption 7: Comparison of historically, culturally and politically similar countries can generate a knowledge base for evidence-based policy making

The knowledge base for policy making should be sought through cross-national studies with the aim of establishing meta-national commonalities in teacher competences for inclusive education in this region. Comparative research in education advocates cross-national research as valuable and even indispensable in establishing the generality of findings and the validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies (Broadfoot, 1990; Kohn, 1989). Where similarities in cross-national studies are found, 'structural constants' or 'identities in social structures' should be identified that enable generalisation at the policy level. Given the similarity of issues addressed in this study across the countries involved, the findings can inform efforts to improve pre-service and in-service teacher education policies and practices in the Western Balkan region.

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